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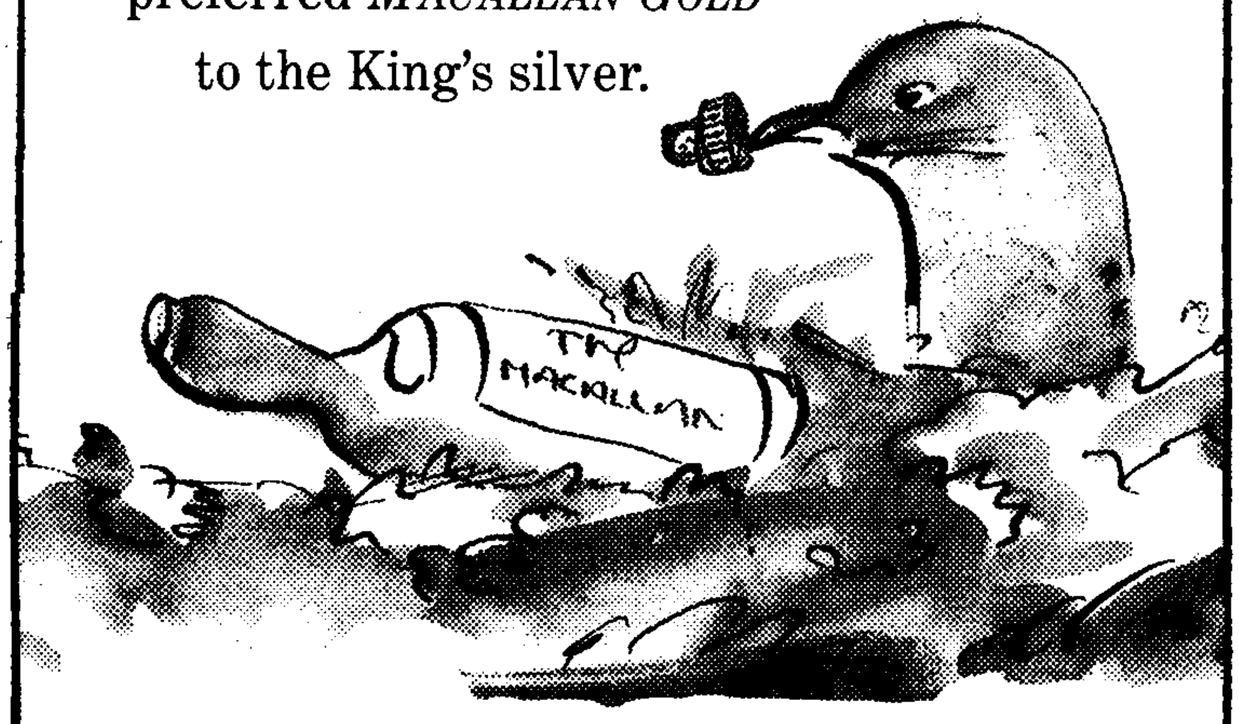

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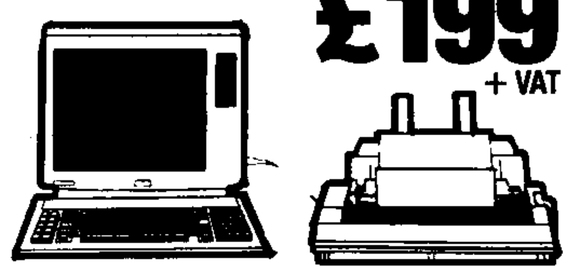

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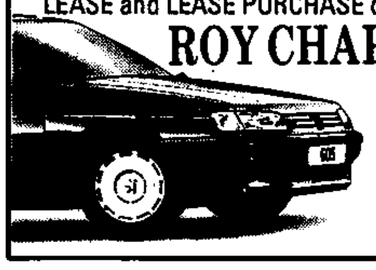

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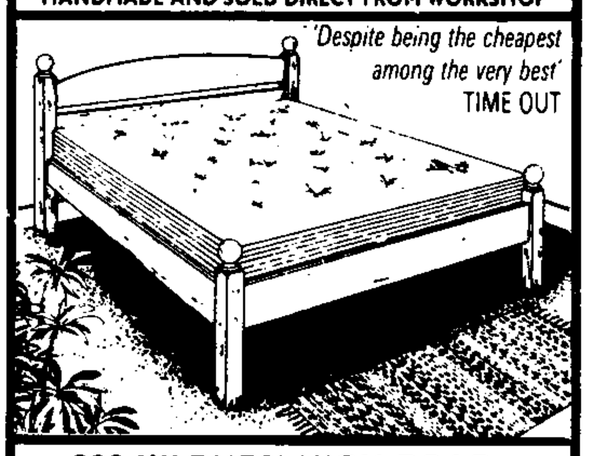

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Pilsner Urquell

Gnome

A Statement from Lord Gnome, Chairman of Gnome Four Security plc, explaining why the early setbacks experienced by his company are irrelevant to the long-term success of the prison privatisation programme and why Gnome Four is the ideal organisation to run British prisons and eventually replace the police.

Gnome Four regrets that Lord Gnome's statement has been lost on the way to the magazine. The statement was due to appear today, but unfortunately disappeared during the transfer from G4's offices. Every effort is being made to find the statement.

E. Strobes
pp Lord Gnome
Gnome Four Five Six Seven Prisoners Gone
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COLOUR SECTION

HOW MUCH has the taxpayer shelled out in the last 10 years to merchant bankers N.M. Rothschild for acting as underwriters or advisers on government privatisations?

It is a reasonable question to ask in view of the quite extraordinary number of privatisation troughs that Rothschild has got its snout into: British Telecom, Britoil, British Gas, Royal Ordnance, British Airways, Rolls Royce, British Airports Authority, British Petroleum, British Steel, water, regional electricity, Northern Ireland electricity... British Coal... the list goes on and on.

However, when the question was asked recently by Labour MP Alan Rogers, no less a person than the prime minister replied: "The fees paid are a matter of commercial confidentiality".

The fees are paid by the treasury, which is presided over by the chancellor, Norman Lamont, and the economic secretary, Anthony Nelson, both of whom learnt what little they know of high finance at the merchant bank which used to employ them: er, N.M. Rothschild.

BAD NEWS for Edward Browning, who was wrongly convicted of the murder of Marie Wilkes on the M50 in 1988 and has been in prison ever since.

Last autumn Browning's case was referred to the court of appeal by home secretary Kenneth Clarke after crucial new evidence of a police witness who saw the murderer — evidence which plainly assisted Browning's case — suddenly and embarrassingly came to light.

After such dramatic new evidence — the policeman's statement was on videotape, and was shown to the nation — even Kenneth Clarke QC, who cannot believe that a legal system that has promoted him can possibly make a serious mistake, had no option but to reopen the case.

Many legal experts felt the reference back would be a formality and that the prosecution would throw in its hand. But not so. The CPS warns that it will fight this one as bitterly as it fought for the continued imprisonment of the three men wrongly convicted of murdering the newspaper boy, Carl Bridgewater. The three have been in prison now for 15 years.

To prove their determination in this, the CPS has appointed as junior barrister in the case one William Coker, who was junior prosecuting barrister in the original Bridgewater prosecution in 1979, and who was chiefly responsible for "starring" many witness statements which were not handed over to the defence. The rules which allowed such non-disclosure have since been changed. The new rules would now almost certainly oblige the prosecution to disclose every one of the "starred" statements.

Coker was appointed by the CPS to act as junior barrister for the prosecution when the Bridgewater case was referred to the court of appeal in 1988-9. He is widely credited with "steeling the spine" of his QC, Jeremy Roberts, who at one stage indicated that he might be prepared to drop the case against one of the three men, Michael Hickey, on the not unreasonable grounds that there was now no evidence against him. Coker insisted that the case should stand, and was rewarded by the judges who upheld the three men's guilt.

A similar determination is likely to be shown by Coker in the Browning case.

ON THE DESK of Sir Humphrey-soundalike Sir David Hannay, our man at the United Nations, is an autographed photograph of himself with the then Mrs Thatcher, from whom all things then flowed.

But Sir David is quick to spot which way the wind blows. After Baroness Thatcher inveighed last week about John Major's tacit connivance in the killing fields of Bosnia, Sir David has been heard opining that her ladyship is "a political has-been".

Let us hope for the sake of Sir David's future diplomatic career that she doesn't spring back to life like de Gaulle — or Dracula even.

BOSNIA LATEST

NEW UN ENVOYS RIDE IN

The Mail ON SUNDAY

ON 11 APRIL the *Mail on Sunday* revealed that a former lover of Johnny Bryan, the toe-sucking royal financial adviser, had been HIV-positive at the time of her brief fling with him in the mid-1980s.

The newspaper had had the story for several weeks, but delayed publication because of fearsome threats of injunctions from lawyers acting for Bryan. Eventually, however, it occurred to the *Mail* that the story could not possibly be defamatory of Bryan — there was no suggestion that he had known of her condition — and it went ahead. In spite of all the pre-publication huffing and puffing, no writ has followed.

And who was the solicitor who threatened the *Mail* so energetically but fruitlessly on behalf of the Duchess of York's friend? Step forward our old friend Peter Carter-Fuck.

Meanwhile, the affair may yet give rise to a different sort of litigation. For as soon as *News of the Screws* editor Patsy Chapman saw the story in the *Mail on Sunday*, she promptly pinched it for later editions of her own rag (under the tasteful heading FERGIE FELLA'S EX: I'M HIV). She was also greatly taken with the *Mail*'s photo of Bryan's ex-lover, Peggy Caskie, which showed the mini-skirted lady posing alluringly on a car-bonnet. Naturally the *Screws* couldn't simply lift the picture, since that would be a *prima facie* breach of copyright. But one *Screws* executive then had a bright idea: by ancient custom, literary critics and arts reviewers are allowed to reproduce a certain amount of copyright material — a photo from a new book, for instance — for "review purposes".

And so it was that the photo from the *Mail* was reprinted without permission on page 2 of the *Screws*, above the following caption: "VICTIM: The strain and anguish of Peggy Caskie is captured in this sensitive photograph taken by Robert Knight and appearing in today's *Mail on Sunday* — reviews our Arts Editor". If the gormless Chapman really thought this absurd ruse would protect her, she will soon learn otherwise: the *Mail* is preparing an action for breach of copyright, which it is certain to win.

PS: Last week we rang the *News of the Screws*'s features department and asked to speak to the arts editor. "We haven't got one," a cheery voice informed us.

Daily Mirror

***MIRROR* chief executive David "Rommel" Montgomery poses as a puritanical purger of the "gravy train" on which, he claims, so many *Mirror* journalists used to ride. But for him and his fellow directors the gravy train slurps on and on.**

He has already increased his salary from the miserable £180,000 he was paid when he took over last October to £220,000 (plus at least a potential £1 million in share options). His managing director, Charles "Gorbals" Wilson, was the man who persuaded the entire *Mirror* staff last year to restrain themselves with a below-inflation 3 per cent pay rise. This was necessary, he said, in order to pull the company round from the theft of £100 million by Robert Maxwell (when Wilson sat on his board).

Now it emerges that almost as soon as *Mirror* hacks accepted the three per cent, Wilson was paid a fantastic increase of £70,000 — or about 40 per cent, not 3 — to bring his salary up to £180,000. At the same time, Roger Eastoe, *Mirror* deputy managing director, got a 36 per cent rise — to £150,000.

The same "gravy train" obsession dominates *Mirror* chiefs when it comes to the salaries of those they deem "top journalists".

The lucky few have included royal correspondent James "I can't stand this lot, but I'm a mercenary" Whitaker, boozy photographer Kent Gavin and loud-mouthed sports editor Keith Fisher, who is believed to have joyously accepted a salary increase of £26,000 a year. These increases all have the approval of David Seymour, political editor and ubiquitous spokesman for the *Mirror* Group, whose own salary is said to be £80,000 a year. Seymour is a former top official of the *Mirror*'s National Union of Journalists' chapel (branch), where he pioneered the policy, as he put it, of the "vital importance of bunching salaries, keeping all our pay roughly the same".

DOYENNE of the *Mirror* columnists (and the only one left) Marge Proops gets her picture and a flattering paragraph in the National Union of Journalists' monthly paper for her support for "women's union rights" on International Women's Day.

But for union rights in the *Daily Mirror*, which have now been completely removed, outspoken Marge has had nothing to say.

The Sun

NEIL "Wolfman" Wallis, assistant editor of the *Sun*, is not universally popular with the hacks who toil under his command. There is, therefore, some rejoicing at Wapping over the fact that he seems to have landed the Murdoch rag — and himself — in deep water.

A recent splash in the paper, masterminded by Wallis, claimed to identify the IRA's top terrorist commanders and link them to various killings. It appeared under the headline: IRA'S EVIL UNTOUCHABLES. Though the alleged terrorists were not named in full, the paper did print first names, initials of surnames and other details which made some of the men easily identifiable.

Now seven of the "evil untouchables", who totally deny any terrorist links and claim that the *Sun* was "duped" by dirty tricks merchants on the Protestant side of the Ulster divide, are considering suing the paper for libel. The word from Wapping is that the *Sun* is desperately short of any real evidence, despite the Wolfman's blusterings. An inquiry is underway into whether any *Sun* lawyer actually saw the copy before it was published.

Hacks are taking bets on Wallis's chances of surviving this latest brush with the law. In a previous incarnation, at the *Daily Star*, he was known as the "writ-collector general". At the *Sun* he is renowned as one of the executives responsible for the Elton John rent-boy story, which cost the paper a record £1 million in an out-of-court settlement.

ON 26 FEBRUARY we reported on Rupert Allason's writ for malicious falsehood against Mirror Group Newspapers, Alastair Campbell and Andy McSmith. We have been asked to point out that our report gave only one side of the story.

Alastair Campbell denies being involved in the *Daily Mirror* report which gave rise to the court action; and Andy McSmith denies that he was responsible for the article published in the *Western Morning News*.

Furthermore, Richard Caborn says that he will not, as we reported, be giving evidence that he was approached by Alastair Campbell to sponsor the early-day motion but declined to do so, since he says Alastair Campbell made no such approach. We shall continue to watch this case with interest.

Sunday EXPRESS

"EXCLUSIVE: We Find Love-Child Churchman" screamed the front-page splash in the *Sunday Express* two weeks ago, boasting that "runaway bishop Eamonn Casey has emerged from behind the fortress-like walls of a convent in Central America to talk for the first time about his love affair with his former mistress Annie Murphy".

It was indeed a scoop. Bishop Casey seemed to have spoken freely and at length, condemning Annie Murphy's recent book as "full of wicked fabrications and wilful lies". Unfortunately the same could be said of the *Express*'s story: Bishop Casey had not given the paper an interview at all.

The author of the *Sunday Express*'s bogus "exclusive" — also printed in the *Sunday Independent* in Dublin — was Gordon Thomas, a name familiar to *Eye* readers. Four years ago we revealed that Thomas was being investigated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police after selling another bogus "exclusive" to the *Sunday Express*, this time claiming that the IRA had sent an assassination squad, armed with a Stinger missile, to take a pot-shot at Mrs Thatcher during the Montreal summit.

Other dubious scoops which have appeared in the *Express* under his by-line over the years include one about Terry Waite being "spotted" by satellite while being moved around Beirut, and a story about an IRA plot to assassinate the Pope on his Irish tour. Thomas, who has claimed in the past to be an MI6 agent, is also the author of *Pontiff*, a preposterous book about the alleged murder of Pope John Paul I.

Thomas claims that he interviewed Bishop Casey by appointment at the Mexican convent where he has been hiding for the past few months. For good measure, the article included copious quotes from the convent's Reverend Mother, who confided to Thomas that the bishop was "a wonderful story-teller" and would sometimes sing Irish ballads in the evening: "The songs sound very lovely, lovely and sad."

However, both the bishop and the Reverend Mother have told another Irish newspaper, the *Sunday Tribune*, that they never spoke to Gordon Thomas. In Ireland, the faked interview has caused a scandal, leading to calls for the resignation of the editor of the *Sunday Independent*. Over here there has been barely a murmur. Presumably people feel that publishing such tosh is merely what one expects from the *Sunday Express* and its editor, Eve Pollard.

And Eve does publish *a lot* of tosh. Earlier this month she apologised to the Metropolitan police for a story which claimed that anti-terrorist officers from Scotland Yard had "lost" an IRA van loaded with explosives after tailing it round London for 10 days. The story was completely untrue.

Undaunted, the paper returned to the subject of IRA bombs with a campaign to persuade councils to buy "bomb-proof litter bins". It claimed the £400 bins were "proved" to be a life-saver in MoD tests: "But the results of the test were kept secret. And no orders for the bins were placed, despite the IRA continuing to target civilians." This, according to the paper, was a scandal.

In reality, the "life-saver" is unlikely to save any lives at all. Tests show that the bin can only contain the blast from a bomb of half a kilo or less: anything heavier would send shards all over the place, just as with ordinary bins. In towns where the "bomb-proof bins" were installed, the IRA would simply use bigger bombs — thus increasing the risk of casualties. The *Sunday Express* was aware of this, since at least one explosives expert had patiently pointed out that the bin was *not* "bomb-proof". But why let the facts stand in the way of a good story?

The Daily Telegraph

MAX "Hitler" Hastings, *Obergruppenfuhrer* of the *Daily Telegraph*, is showing worrying signs of behaving like an impartial newspaper editor.

Senior *Torygraph* hacks and backbench production personnel have received an angry missive from him denouncing their slipshod journalism over a story concerning Michael Howard, the environment secretary, and his ridiculously deluded plan to develop the East Thames corridor.

Working at Canary Wharf, Hastings has first hand experience of the huge flop that is docklands. Rightly he raged in his memo: "Howard was clearly talking hot air yet we printed every word without question. Standards are falling and I will not put up with it."

O.B.N.

Last week, halfway up an Italian Alp at 6,500 feet, six of us living for a week stacked three high in a room like a "Wagon-Lit" compartment, were all strangers gathered to climb mountains on skis. Yet five were *Spectator* readers. Much delight ensued, and much altitude-induced insomnia alleviated, by this common bond.

Like the old *Times*' first cuckoo correspondence, I wondered if other readers have similar encounters with which to demonstrate the excellence and ubiquity of your magazine, and their own discrimination and taste!

R.G.L. PUGH
Letter to Spectator

Submitted by G. Ted Armstrong.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

FOR MONTHS *Observer* hacks have assumed that the sale of their newspaper by Lonrho — and the consequent sacking of editor and chief executive Donald "Pixie" Trelford — was not a question of if but of when.

The 200-year-old organ is the biggest single loss-maker in Tiny Rowland's empire, and without a daily sister-newspaper to share its overheads it is unlikely to make money. The common belief was that it would soon be bought by one of three suitors — the *Grauniad*, the *Financial Times* or the *Indescribablyboring*.

But something strange is now happening. First, the recent Lonrho AGM came and went without any mention of an imminent sale; then, last month, Trelford entertained a group of directors of the Italian paper *La Repubblica* to dinner in the *Observer*'s boardroom. *La Repubblica* is, along with the Spanish paper *El Pais*, the largest single shareholder in the *Indie* — between them the two Euro-organs own 40 per cent of Andreas Whittam Strobes's company, and the Italians have first option to buy the Spanish stake if ever *El Pais* wants to pull out. What were they doing fraternising with Trelford?

One possibility, of course, is that the *Indie* is indeed about to launch a bid for the *Observer*, and they wanted to talk terms. But in that case it is unlikely that Trelford would have allowed them through the door, since he is implacably opposed to letting Strobes and Co get their sticky fingers on his newspaper.

Could it be, then, that the Pixie is preparing to turn the tables and avenge himself on his great foe Whittam Strobes by organising a Lonrho buy-out of the *Indescribablyboring*? For if the Italians agreed to a sale, and in the meantime exercised their claim on the *El Pais* shares, they would be in a strong position to force the deal through whether Whittam Strobes liked it or not. The *Observer* would then not only have a daily sister-newspaper, but it could also close down its main rival, the *Sindie*, thereby ensuring almost instant profitability. And the wily Trelford would keep his job, while poor old Strobes would be cast into the outer darkness.

OBSERVER

PIXIE, however, appears to be keeping his options open. For there is another rumour doing the rounds — that the *Observer* is about to fall into the hands of the House of Saud.

Foreign editor Adrian Hamilton, presumably acting on orders from Trelford and Rowland, has spiked a story by veteran Middle East correspondent Helga Graham which was rather less flattering to the House of Saud than Tiny's paper has been to the House of Fayed.

Observer staff, apprehensive at having their future contracts determined under Islamic law, report that Hamilton had enthusiastically accepted the story from Graham, who has been writing for the paper for 25 years. The article detailed the fault lines in Saudi society, and included eyewitness reports from leading Saudis that the government executed not only the 63 men involved in the takeover of the Great Mosque in 1979, but their wives and children as well, bringing the death toll up to 250.

Hamilton promised Graham a position on the right hand leader page, highlighting this aspect. Then it was postponed... and postponed again.

Graham is no stranger to the *Observer*'s ways with exclusives, having tried no fewer than three times in the summer of 1990 to get in a story predicting the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. But in the end the Saudi story, the fruit of years of work, was spiked, presumably because it may have affected the sale of the newspaper to the Saudis. After the story was spiked, the paper showed an ominous interest in the identities of Graham's informants.

The Saudis, especially after the Gulf war, realize the importance of controlling the media. They have bought up almost all the London-based Arab press, and last year bought UPI, the international news agency. The *Observer* would give them a respectable (?) base in the western media as well; but they would not have appreciated a story in the paper revealing the fragility and rapacity of their tribal rule.

HACKWATCH No 43: Marina Mowatt

MARINA MOWATT (*née* Ogilvy) has but one claim to fame: she is a minor member of the royal family who caused a brief stir a few years ago when she eloped with a photographer called Paul Mowatt.

For a few weeks she was all over the tabloids and *Hello!* Then the hullabaloo subsided. And, er, that was it — until last autumn when the royal-crazy editor of the *Sunday Express*, Eve Pollard, suddenly hired her.

At an annual salary of £95,000 for a weekly jotting that is often no more than 500 words, Marina Mowatt suddenly became, *pro rata*, the highest-paid columnist in Fleet Street. Her only rivals in the money league are Julie Burchill of the *Mail on Sunday* and Victor Lewis-Smith, television critic of the London *Evening Standard*, both of whom rake in £100,000; but at least la Burchill fills a whole page every week, while poor old Lewis-Smith is obliged to write his TV column every day.

Besides, Burchill and Lewis-Smith did have some kind of reputation before they were hired. Ms Mowatt, however, had no journalistic experience at all. Nor was she known for her wit or pungent views. What was the poor girl to do? Simple: read the newspapers and diligently paraphrase them.

From time to time, perhaps conscious that columnists are expected to have opinions, she has even ventured a comment or two, but they are without exception banal. Still, as long as Lady Bollard keeps handing over the dosh, why should she worry? Here is a digest of what Mowatt has done this year to justify that weekly £1,800 pay-cheque:

3 January: "To hear of children of any age being attacked, abused, abandoned or suffering can be pretty harrowing." This novel reflection has been prompted by newspaper stories of a baby being abandoned under a bush and another baby being stabbed while asleep in its cot. "These," Mowatt fearlessly opines, "are atrocious acts of cruelty against innocent infants."

10 January: Mowatt has noticed newspaper reports of children suffering epileptic-style convulsions while playing Nintendo games. She finds this "worrying". Her conclusion: "Parents are going to have to take more interest in their children's out-of-school activities."

17 January: The newspapers have been full of articles about a letter from the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission claiming that the Prince and Princess of Wales have been manipulating the press. Perceptive as ever, Mowatt concludes that the royal couple "have appeared to use the press to their own ends when they felt like it".

24 January: According to press reports, Shell has issued leaflets warning drivers that using a mobile phone can cause a spark which could ignite petrol vapour, leading to a fire or an explosion. As ever, Mowatt is ready with a provocative opinion: "However small, it is still a risk and, thanks to Shell, more people are now being made aware of it."

31 January: All week the tabloids have been full of headlines about the unsavoury antics of the Marquess of Blandford, and sympathetic stories about his wife and child. As usual, Mowatt does not exactly beg to differ. "I feel sorry for Becky Blandford and their baby son George," she reveals. "I would not be surprised if she is rueing the day she ever set eyes on him."

7 February: According to newspaper reports, the government has launched an advertising campaign to increase the number of car passengers using rear seatbelts. "Let us hope the message hits home," Mowatt pontificates.

14 February: England's cricketers have been mocked in the press for their poor performance on the field and their foolhardiness in eating Chinese food just before a test match. "With their ill-advised choice of Chinese *sustenance*," Mowatt observes, "England's cricketers are not faring very well in India."

21 February: The murder of Jamie Bulger has dominated the week's headlines. Commentators have condemned it as tragic and senseless, and have written hundreds of column inches about how vulnerable children are today. Mowatt, by contrast, considers the crime to be "tragic and senseless". Moreover, it has "certainly made us more anxious about the vulnerability of our children today."

28 February: According to the newspapers, 80 veterans of the Battle of Arnhem are to mark its 50th anniversary next year with a parachute jump. "Surely a sterling example to the rest of us," Mowatt believes.

14 March: Mowatt has been reading the newspapers again. Writing of the Derek Hatton trial, she notes that towards the end his "ties became more decorative, his tan deeper, the after-shave stronger". As the *Eye* later points out, this is simply plagiarised from a *Daily Express* report of the case. Elsewhere, she notes that "Bingo has moved into the Nineties by becoming both high-tech and politically correct". This, too, is copied almost verbatim from a feature in the London *Evening Standard*.

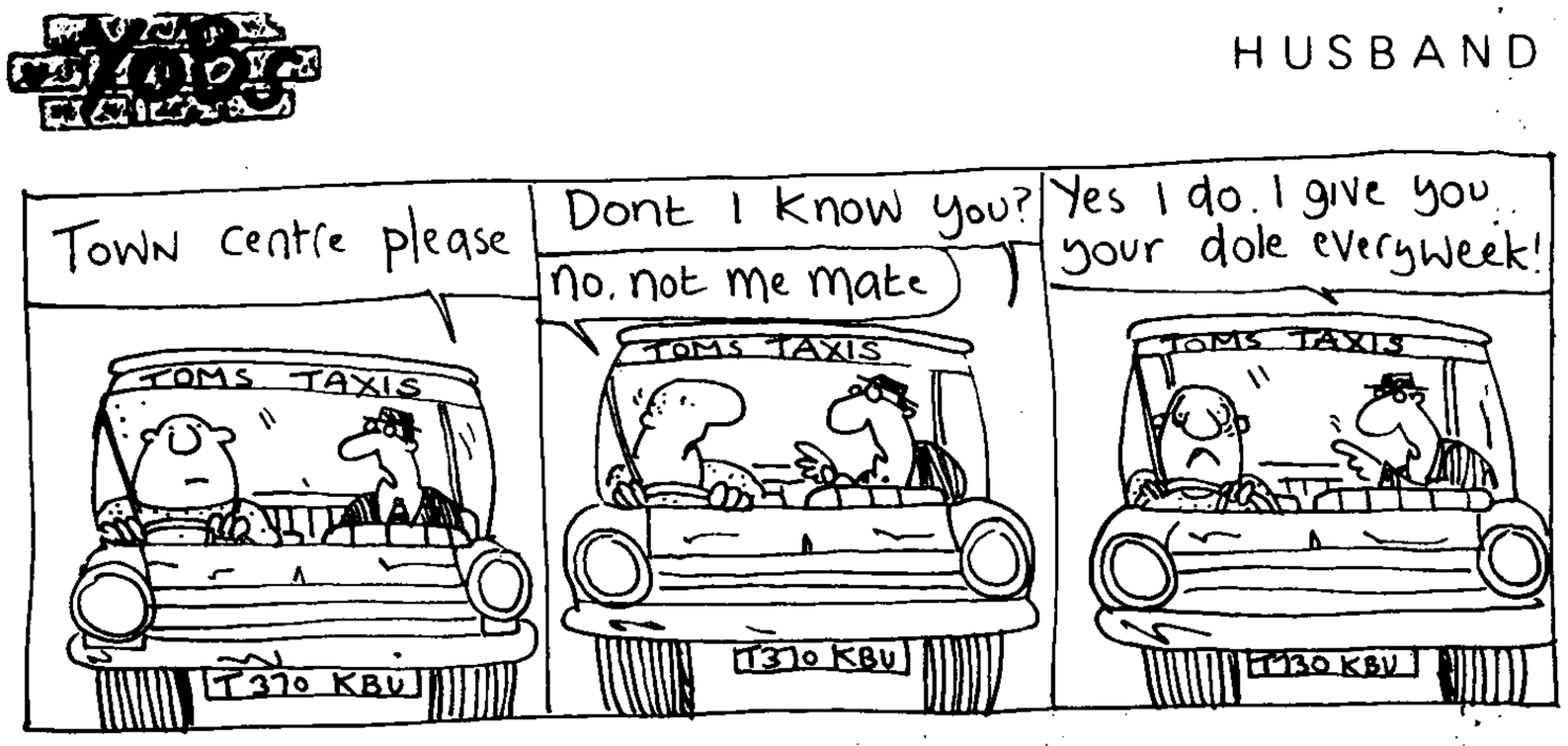
21 March: Mowatt has noticed a report about a garden centre in Nottinghamshire which is exhibiting Britain's oldest garden gnome. Her comment is brief and forthright: "You either love them or hate them, garden gnomes that is."

28 March: Benetton has produced a picture of the Queen with a black face. Mowatt judiciously opines that the company "might just have overstepped the mark".

4 April: The papers have all attacked Hoover and its executives over the fiasco of the free air-tickets. Mowatt does likewise, writing of "the justifiable wrath of thousands of disappointed customers" who were "treated so appallingly in Hoover's farcical air-ticket promotion".

11 April: Madonna has appeared on the front of a magazine clasping her naked chest and wearing a crown of thorns. Most newspapers have condemned it as an offensive publicity stunt. But what does the *Sunday Express*'s top columnist think? "Madonna's latest photograph... is an obvious attempt to gain maximum publicity for herself while causing maximum offence."

As Hercule Poirot might have said, never overlook the obvious. Marina Mowatt certainly doesn't.



NOW THE committee stage of the rail privatisation bill is over, a drastic amendment may soon be proposed by the government.

To make up for the complete lack of interest in bidding for franchised rail services, BR will be allowed to compete against the private sector for these new franchises. This would keep down subsidy costs to the treasury, because BR's required rate of return (8 percent), though high by historic standards, is well below what private operators would expect to make.

Nobody in Whitehall seems willing to claim the credit for this sensible, but somewhat heretical, change in policy, which is being wrongly attributed to the reluctant author of the bill, ambitious under-secretary Philip Wood. (Wood, who is now in line for secondment to Yeltsin as key adviser on the privatisation of the trans-Siberian railway, has an alibi: he has been house-hunting in Irkutsk).

The most likely progenitor of this new proposal to rescue BR from limbo is ex-deputy secretary John "Mitterrand" Palmer. After spending five years with BR since his retirement from the transport department, Palmer knows what it is like to have worked for Vichy and the resistance. Once a ferocious persecutor of BR and all its works who would happily have filled the *vélodrome d'hiver* with railwaymen, Palmer has totally recanted and, with all his knowledge of the bureaucratic mind, is perfect for his present job as head of BR's (anti) privatisation unit.

Palmer is on strong ground when he warns former underlings in Marsham Street about the high cost of privatisation. Now that the treasury plot to cream off BR's pension fund surplus of £8 billion seems to have been foiled, there is no easy money to be made out of destroying the national rail network. Now even the idea of allowing BR to compete for the new franchises is, in Palmer's impeccable Whitehall-ese, "worth very careful consideration".

IT IS NOT just French socialist Jacques Attali's profligate European bank of "reconstruction" that knows how to fritter away taxpayers money. The Welsh can do it, too.

Last year the Welsh Development Agency (WDA), the quango whose job is to revive the Welsh economy, was taken to task by the national audit office (NAO) over the £1 million-plus it paid out in unauthorised golden handshakes and £33,000-plus in free oil and petrol for its top executives (which even covered private motoring).

There was also criticism of the way the WDA struck a deal with Raymond Carignan to become the agency's representative in the United States. Carignan's office in the US was kitted out with equipment to the tune of £53,280, which became the property of his Maryland-registered company, Welsh Development International Inc, when the agency terminated its arrangement with him. Not to mention the £7,098 incurred when the WDA's chairman, North Wales publican' son Dr Gwyn Jones, and the then WDA chief executive, David Waterstone, flew to New York by Concorde to interview Carignan.

The Commons public accounts committee (PAC) arranged a meeting to discuss the NAO report and insisted that Dr Jones appear. Shortly before the oral session, Jones announced his retirement, saying he intended to leave by 31 March if a replacement could be found. Welsh secretary David Hunt began the search for a new boyo to replace Jones. Announced at the same time was the retirement of Sir Donald Walters, a former Tory party functionary who is known in Wales as Sir Donald Walters CBE — Chairman of Bloody Everything — because of his numerous quango appointments.

The search for a new chairman (£42,235 for two-and-a-half days a week) eventually came up with Roy Bichan, ex-chairman of Robertson Research International, but ratification of this appointment has been delayed while the serious fraud office (SFO) completes an investigation into another company of which Bichan was chairman, Butte Mining.

Meanwhile, Gwyn Jones's retirement on 31 March did not come to pass and he has been given an extra three months by David Hunt. The PAC report has still not appeared and there is talk of an unprecedented further PAC meeting with yet another appearance by Jones to explain further discrepancies in the 1991-92 accounts.

It has also emerged that following the PAC oral hearing last December, the WDA commissioned a report by Touche Ross's Cardiff office into the nature of redundancy payments made by the agency. Cars on the executive car leasing scheme had been lumped into redundancy awards without any declaration to the Inland Revenue that they were benefits in kind, thus reducing the tax liability of the payee and the overall expenditure of the WDA. The first draft of the Touche Ross report contained the observation that there had been a clear intent to defraud the Inland Revenue. The WDA put pressure on Touche Ross to remove this phrase, which it did. However, the first draft report was seen by the NAO's Cardiff office, which blew the whistle and alerted members of the PAC.

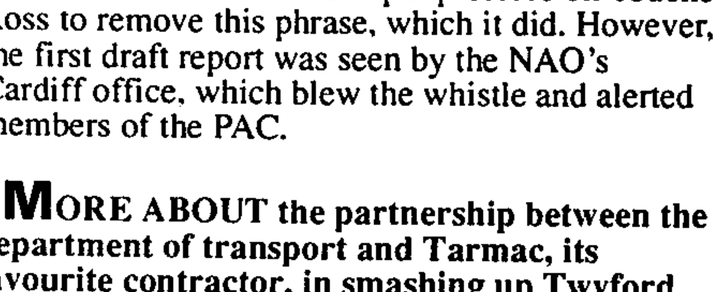
MORE ABOUT the partnership between the department of transport and Tarmac, its favourite contractor, in smashing up Twyford Down for a motorway extension.

An anonymous letter takes the *Eye* to task for attributing the handing over of Twyford Down land to the department by Winchester College entirely to the headmaster. The authority for handing over this precious and vital piece of land would not be vested in the headmaster: the decision would have been taken by the board of governors when Lord Aldington was its chairman.

Lord Aldington, an old Wykhamist, has always shown a deep interest in his alma mater, and was a fellow of the college from 1972 to 1987. Before launching a glittering career in the City, he was, as Toby Low, a Tory MP for 17 years and a deputy chairman of the Tory party.

Last May and June the *Guardian* revealed that the foreign office and the ministry of defence had sprung to Lord Aldington's assistance and supplied him with confidential documents to boost his case against Count Tolstoy, whom Aldington had sued for libel. The noble lord won the case and was awarded £1.5 million damages.

'Backbiter'



"I prefer continual harassment"

MPs FOR HIRE

EVERYONE agrees that Britain's members of parliament work incredibly hard — especially when it comes to lining their own pockets.

Exploiting their access to Westminster's inside track, they can earn fat consultancy fees, sometimes many times higher than their already generous parliamentary salaries.

So that voters know what their MPs are up to when they are not overseeing affairs of state or constituency matters, the *Eye* continues its series listing the companies and lobbies that bankroll our most honourable members.

PART THREE: PRIVATISATION **(companies created largely as a result of the sale of public services to the private sector.)**

Andrew Bowden *Brighton Kemptown:* Consultant to Southern Water plc.

Ian Bruce *South Dorset:* Consultant to Southern Electricity plc.

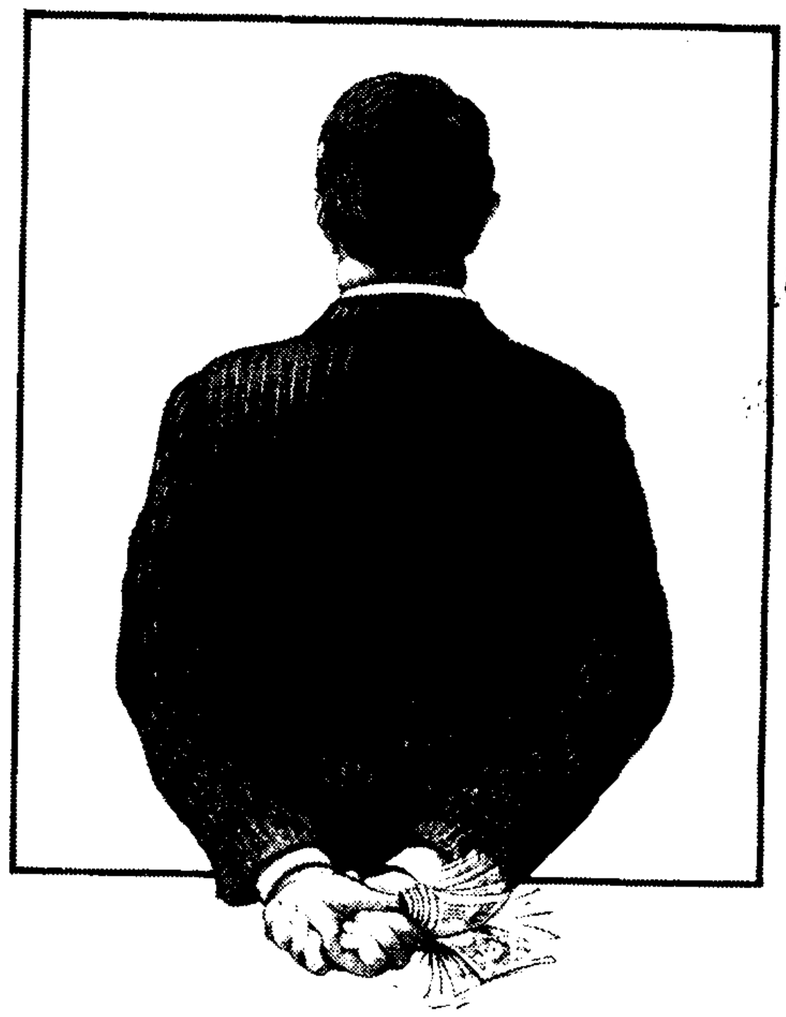
Sir Norman Fowler *Sutton Coldfield:* Director of National Freight Corporation (NFC) plc; since 1990, non-executive director of Group 4 Security. [Ho ho!]

Philip Gallie *Ayr:* Parliamentary liaison consultant to Scottish Power plc (with use of company car and private health care, courtesy of Scottish Power plc).

Andrew Hargreaves *Birmingham Hall Green:* Consultant to Midlands Electricity plc.

Alan Haselhurst *Saffron Walden:* Consultant to National Power plc.

Tim Rathbone *Lewes:* Consultant to South East



Electricity Board (SEEBOARD) plc.

Sir Giles Shaw *Pudsey:* Director of Yorkshire Water plc; British Steel plc.

Sir Keith Speed *Ashford:* Director of Folkestone and Dover Water Services plc.

Bill Walker *North Tayside:* Director of Stagecoach International Services Ltd.

LIBEL NEWS

THE SAGA of the prime minister's libel action against *New Statesman & Society* continues with the revelation that his solicitor, David Hooper of Biddle & Co, has been pursuing a strategy with which he strongly disagrees.

Steve "Beardie" Platt, the editor of *NSS*, wrote plaintively in the *Sunday Times* a few weeks ago about the injustice caused by libel laws which allow plaintiffs to sue printers and distributors and allow those printers and distributors to settle actions by payment of damages prior to trial of the main issue.

This means that where publications indemnify distributors against libel actions, plaintiffs can obtain damages from the publications by the back door. The alternative — if the publications fail to indemnify a distributor — is that their product will be denied distribution. Thus when Robert Maxwell was suing Tom Bower over his unauthorised biography *Maxwell the Outsider*, the mere threat of lawsuits against booksellers was enough to persuade most of them to remove copies from their shelves, even though the lawsuit against Bower and the publishers, who put in a spirited defence, never came to court.

Bower's solicitor in this action was one David Hooper of Biddle & Co... the same David Hooper who has been representing John Major in his actions against *NSS* and its distributors. In January last year, when Maxwell's crimes were beginning to emerge, Hooper wrote a letter to the *Times* which, among other things, argued that the Maxwell experience "highlighted the need to restrict pre-emptive actions against distributors" and required "a reassessment of actions against distributors before the main action has been decided".

In the circumstances, surely the honourable thing for Mr Hooper to do would be to decline Mr Major's shilling?

Grovel

YES, the relentless diet of sex and violence put out by born-again Christian Rupert Murdoch's Sky Movies *does* have a corrupting influence — especially on his staff.

***Eye* readers will recall how BSkyB news presenter Scott Chisholm attacked his colleague Chris Mann, having earlier burst into the studio and abused him while Mann was on air. The immediate reason was that Chisholm had given an ill-advised interview to an Irish newspaper, the *Sunday World*, in which he had used four-letter words and claimed that he had fallen for his wife on a blind date because she had big tits. For some reason he blamed Mann for alerting the London media. Both men have since been dismissed by BSkyB: Chisholm for causing a disturbance and assaulting Mann; Mann for the novel offence of being the victim of an assault.**

However, I can reveal that the 6ft3in, 20-stone New Zealander Chisholm had been nursing a resentment against Mann ever since word went round the Sky offices that Chisholm's hidden dimensions were less than impressive. Chisholm had been discussing Ugandan news with an autocue girl in his dressing-room between bulletins, but the girl told colleagues that he was genitally-challenged. This led to Mann observing that "the smallest prick at Sky belonged to the biggest prick" and violence was bound to follow.

What Rupert will make of all this, I shudder to think: the autocue girl was also sacked and fittingly, I gather, now sells vibrators door-to-door for the Ann Summers sex shop empire.

I HEAR of an outrageous attempt to smear William Cash MP, the heroic anti-Maastricht bore.

A few weeks ago, on a Saturday morning, *Observer* home affairs hack David Rose received a call from a usually reliable source who claimed that Cash had recently travelled to Paris where he had collected a £500,000 cheque for his anti-Maastricht campaign.

Apparently, the source claimed, the money had come from a group of businessmen acting as nominees of the Kuwaiti royal family, who were said to be keen to destabilise the Major administration because of its departure from the pro-Kuwaiti line. Rose was advised to steal a march on the Monday morning papers which would carry the story in full (although they never did).

However, he investigated the claim and ultimately dismissed it. He concluded that his source, whom he knew to be acquainted with the dirty tricks department at Conservative central office, had himself been duped.

● *I HEAR that shortly before he died Lord Ridley, the father of privatisation and Margaret Thatcher's transport minister from 1983-86, wrote to his friend Sir Robert Reid, the former BR chairman, denouncing the current government's rail bill as a total nonsense, which he said he was looking forward to opposing when it reached the Lords.*

TO OAKLY PARK, Shropshire, whither the delightful Viscount and Viscountess Windsor have invited me for a restful weekend.

After dinner, however, the serenity of the house is shattered by the appearance of an over-refreshed young man who strips off his clothes and proceeds to "breakdance" naked in front of the guests. Peering at this amazing apparition, I realise that it is none other than my old friend Rory Knight Bruce, the pukka *Evening Standard* hack who is master of the local hunt.

Rory's fondness for exotic dancing is fast becoming the talk of the county. At a recent hunt ball in Shropshire, local farmers watched him execute a passionate jitterbug with an unidentified male friend, who wore wrap-around sunglasses and had painted sideburns on his face. Imagine the yokels' surprise on learning that the mysterious dancing partner was in fact Charles Moore, hip young editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*.

● *THE much-publicised affair between Richard Ingrams (107) and Miss Deborah Bosley (28) has clearly been taking its toll on the Oldie's health.*

After a weekend of revelations about "Big Dick" and "Big Debbie", Ingrams failed to turn up to work on Monday. Apparently he was "having trouble with his back".

"He was determined to finish"

ALTHOUGH much less valuable than he was under Thatch, "Sir" Tim Tinkerbell has not reduced the fees he charges his personal PR clients. At £120,000 a year, St Thomas's hospital could only afford to keep him for three months.

● *IN THE WAKE of Andrew Morton's publishing success last year, two other royal-watchers are preparing books on the Windsors.*

The Daily Mirror's James Whitaker and the Daily Mail's Nigel Pratt-Dumpster — who right up until the publication of the Camillagate tapes was confidently asserting that there was not a shred of truth in rumours of an adulterous affair between the Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker-Bowles — are both intending to offer their "inside" stories to the world.

Indeed, so expert are Whitaker and Pratt-Dumpster that their books are being ghost-written by, respectively, Christopher Wilson and Peter Evans (who ghosted Pratt-Dumpster's book about Christina Onassis).

Pip Pip!

■ CHRISTOPHER LOGUE is retiring from *Private Eye* after more than 30 years. His True Stories first appeared in 1962 and he subsequently edited Pseuds Corner for a long period. "So. Farewell then, Fellow Poet," as E.J. Thribb might say — and thank you.

Pseuds Corner

Equally daring — perhaps even more so — were the luncheon arrangements. The bus pulled up alongside a McDonald's and we were all served boxes of hamburgers in our seats, with only Coke to drink. Can you imagine?

PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE
Sunday Telegraph

Act 1, Scene 1: Activities

1. Hippolyta was already ruler and Queen of the Amazons when Theseus captured her in war.

If you, like Hippolyta, had a career before you married, what concerns might you have about your role in the marriage and your career after you got married?

Write a diary entry about your concerns related to combining your career with a marriage.

2. Egeus accuses Lysander of bewitching his daughter Hermia. Why might Egeus think this way? What would you want to reply to Egeus?

In your groups discuss some piece of advice you could pass along to Egeus. Write one or two comments you would make in a book titled *Between Parent and Teenager*.

If you were a guidance counsellor, how would you suggest Egeus and Hermia settle their problem? With two classmates, role-play a situation in which Egeus and Hermia receive counselling related to their problem.

Edition of A Midsummer Night's Dream for Canadian students

What was your first sexual experience?
It was a beautiful sunny day and I was masturbating on a hillside of buttercups in Western Ireland. I discovered that when people shouted "you wanker", there was actually a connection with the movement of the corresponding hand action and the penis. I remember lying there and being totally shocked as these glistening white pearls erupted. It seemed weird.

CARL SMYTH (of Madness)
Ludus

Act 2: Consider the Whole Act

1. Every character in Act 2 has a problem or is in some sort of difficulty. Choose one character and invent a product that might help the character solve his or her problem. For example, what product could help Helena win Demetrius' love? or Puck get his boss's instructions straight?

With your group, brainstorm different approaches to selling the product. Discuss which sales pitch most suits the product you are creating.

Write an advertisement for your product with other members of your group and videotape a 15-30 second commercial.

Edition of A Midsummer Night's Dream for Canadian students

The new DCC reminds me of ancient cylinder seals from the Sumerian culture. A small object with an important message: in the first case, the perfect representation of hieroglyphics; in the case of DCC, the fascinating precision of sound reproduction.

GIUSEPPE SINOPOLI (conductor)
on Digital Compact Cassettes
Q Magazine

CONTRIBUTORS: Fay Hodges, Brenda Gibbins, S. Molnar, Tim Berkeley.

£10 paid for entries

EYE TV

Golden Palace
(C4)

THERE WERE reports in the newspapers last week of a man who died during a penis-extension operation, which he had secretly arranged as a birthday surprise for his wife.

The television equivalent of this procedure is the format-extension operation, by which producers attempt to increase the length and pleasure given by a hit show with a little bit of stretching and fleshing out. Sadly — like the tragically deluded husband in the news last week — the show often dies in the process.

The operations are also probably equally miscalculated. The widow of the stretched-to-death man told the press that she had always thought him good in bed. Similarly, fans of the prolonged programmes tend to conclude that the surgery has done nothing to fill out their enjoyment.

The latest show to get the format-extension operation is *Golden Girls*, the final episode of which, and departure of Dorothy, was swiftly followed by *Golden Palace*, in which the three remaining Miami singles are running a hotel.

Golden Girls, written by Susan Harris, was one of the sharpest US sit-coms, with gag-writing in the grand American tradition. Admittedly, it shared the fault of all American television (see also *M*A*S*H* and *thirtysomething*) in needing to be ultimately life-affirming. (In this connection, another piece of significant television news last week was that the US networks are reluctant to buy up the rights to *One Foot In The Grave* because of fears that its negative depiction of the elderly might upset the National Association of Third-Agers, as wrinklies are known in zones of political correctness.) However, a strong situation — of rich female wrinklies waiting for god in Miami — was explored with raucous and remorseless humour.

Golden Palace — although written, initially at least, by Susan Harris — abandons the situation, and replaces it with a hotel, making the rich and languid widows working girls again. But the new setting is uneasily dealt with. There are, for example, few specific hotel jokes, with the humour deriving from precisely the same character traits as in the first series. Blanche's nymphomania is merely given a tiny leisure industry twist. "I was told the new owners were part of a chain," says the bell-boy on introduction to his new bosses. "The only chain I've ever been part of I ain't telling you about," zings Blanche. It's a nice enough line, but the forcing of its familiar shape in to the new format tends to lead you to conclude that Harris should either have pensioned off all the golden girls after Dorothy's departure or written a fresh sit-com about a hotel.

The sadness is that there existed more than enough evidence in television history that sit-com spin-offs always falter and nearly always flop. The triumphantly successful *M*A*S*H* spawned the one-season clunker *AfterM*A*S*H*, in which the docs lumpenly adjusted to civilian life after Korea. British examples — like *Grace and Favour*, which ruinously diluted the small humour of *Are You Being Served?*, and *French Fields*, which moved *Fresh Fields* across the channel — strongly suggest that sit-coms should be contracepting. The offspring go to bad. This point needs to be made with some urgency, because there are alarming reports from America of plans to give the glorious and recently-departed *Cheers* a format extension operation, with those of the cast who still want contracts. Say it ain't so, Woody.

'Square Eyes'

"Compared with France and Germany we compare ourselves with them far more than they compare themselves with us"

I-BSkyB

Albert Square in EastEnders looks realistic except for one thing — I haven't seen any TV satellite dishes there! In real life they're all over the place these days. Wakey wakey, BBC!

J. STONE
Letter to News of the World

Submitted by Ian Haigh.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

MEDIA NEWS

RADIO ONE'S attempts to promote itself as relevant to the youf of today are proving embarrassing to judge by the BBC's latest poster campaign.

A blow-up of a cassette labelled "demo's" is shown alongside a shot of a student demonstration (*geddit?*): and among the placards are three from the Socialist Worker Student Party exhorting the comrades to FIGHT STUDENT POVERTY! KICK THE ... OUT!

In each case the names of the people to be kicked out — the Tories, *natch* — have been carefully rendered illegible. Presumably this act of censorship was carried out by the Street-Porter-style poseur radicals at Radio One who don't really want to distance themselves from the BBC "establishment" at all.

THE following snippet was entered anonymously into the BBC's computer system at Bush House:

ONCE upon a time, the BBC and the Japanese decided to have a competitive boat race on the River Thames. Both teams practised long and hard to reach their peak performance. On the big day, they were as ready as they could be. The Japanese won by a mile.

Afterwards, the BBC team became very discouraged by the loss and morale sagged. Senior Management decided that the reason for the crushing defeat had to be found, and a project team was set up in the New Forest to investigate the problem and recommend appropriate action.

Their conclusion: the problem was that the Japanese team had eight people rowing and one person steering. The BBC team had one person rowing and eight people steering.

Senior management immediately hired a consultancy company to do a study on the team's structure. Millions of pounds and several months later they concluded that: too many people were steering and not enough rowing.

To prevent losing to the Japanese next year, the team structure was changed to four "steering managers", three "senior steering managers" and one "executive steering manager". A performance and appraisal system was set up to give the person rowing the boat more incentive to work harder and become a key performer. "We must give him empowerment and enrichment. This ought to do it."

The next year the Japanese won by two miles. The BBC laid off the rower for poor performance, sold off all the paddles, cancelled all capital investment for new equipment and halted development of a new canoe, awarded high performance awards to the consultants and distributed the money saved to senior management.

BY TRADITION, the BBC's director-general is also president of the corporation's sports and social club, which organises staff football matches, theatre outings, games of tiddlywinks and other harmless pastimes.

The presidency is merely an honorary position, but it is meant to demonstrate that the D-G takes an avuncular interest in his employees' extra-curricular well-being.

When Sir Michael Checkland retired from the BBC, the club's executive committee wrote to John Birt inviting him to become the club's new figurehead. They assumed his agreement would be a formality, but they had not reckoned on the new director-general's mania for managerial posturing: Birt has written back to the committee's chairman, Cliff Taylor, saying that he regrets he cannot accept the honorary presidency until such time as he has seen the club's detailed "business plan", complete with full cost-flow projections and the like.

Needless to say, no such document exists. The committee, desperate to placate him, is now cudgelling its collective brain to work out how keep-fit classes, chess tournaments and brass-rubbing groups can be adapted to the grim requirements of Birtism.

MUCH embarrassment at ITN where the future career of reporter Robert Moore, until recently posted to Bosnia, is in jeopardy following allegations that he and his camera crew have been inflating their expenses.

The curiosity of executives in London was aroused when the expenses submitted by Moore and his team rose way beyond those submitted by another ITN hack who had been out to the war-torn republic. Managers then sent Andrew Tilley out to Bosnia, as a managment investigator who posed as another producer.

As a result of what Tilley discovered, Moore and his team have been withdrawn from the former Yugoslavia and the claims they made for taxi drivers, minders, interpreters, etc. have been challenged.

YORKSHIRE Television has completed its clearout of Tyne Tees directors following its takeover of the Newcastle-based company. Staff now fear that YTV hawks will asset-strip with a vengeance.

Understandably, workers view with suspicion the appointment as managing director of Tyne Tees of John Calvert. As personnel director of YTV, he supervised the shedding of more than 600 staff before, during and after the company's ridiculous £37 million franchise bid.

Calvert was one of 18 YTV directors who did very nicely, thank you, while more lowly staff were sent down the road. The top brass shared £1.45 million in "golden handcuffs" to stay with YTV during the franchise period. Such loyalty! But even Calvert and his six-figure salary might look enviously at YTV managing director Clive Leach. He was paid £491,000 last year. Meanwhile, remaining staff are being threatened with a pay freeze.

LUVVIES

"In England, it is very, very difficult to escape a sense of being punished for being an artist of any kind. Art is not profitable. Throughout the centuries, artists have been owned, the products of their labour confiscated and abused by the ruling classes.

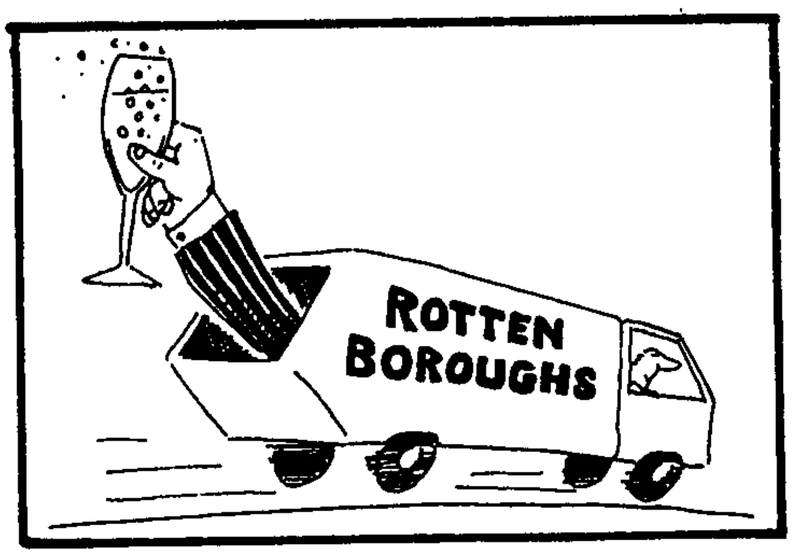
"In these media days, a lot of actors are seriously undermined and disenfranchised. They are abused in a new way. Performers are used by the media to sell papers, not to sell their ideas.

"They agree to be icons because that's what they're told their lot is. It's internalised oppression. This is a mistake. There is a terrible punishment in store for anyone who attains any sort of public profile."

TILDA SWINTON
Times Saturday Review

Submitted by Horace Batchelor.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.



LEEDS

LIKE all good Labour-controlled local authorities, Leeds city council opposes the pit closures, the dash for gas and the general running down of the coal industry. Well, it does on paper, anyway.

Yorkshire miners were thus less than happy to learn that the council is involved in secret talks with a local hospital trust and the city's two universities to heat city centre buildings by a combined heat and power station — fuelled by gas.

With miners accusing the authority of stabbing them in the back, council chiefs moved swiftly to claim that no firm decisions about fuel had yet been taken — even though the council's own energy supremo had confirmed the plan was for gas.

BIRMINGHAM

MORE on the selective education that seems to be alive and well in the socialist utopia of Birmingham — so long as you are a Labour councillor or a friend of one.

With more than £55 million a year diverted from the education budget to pay the interest on white elephants like the £180 million International Convention Centre, Birmingham's schools are among the worst in the country — with just a few exceptions. It is at those few remaining centres of excellence that one often finds the children of Labour councillors and their chums.

One such school is the strictly Church of England St Peter's school in Moseley. It is so popular that parents actually move house to be near it, suddenly find God, convert and then attend the local church, which coincidentally is also attended by governors and teachers.

Senior Labour councillors Najma Hafeez and Albert Bore, however, managed their own minor miracle by obtaining a place for their child without any such rigmarole — even though Hafeez is a Muslem, Bore has converted (renaming himself Omar Farooq) and their child is certainly Muslem.

Coincidentally, Hafeez is chairman of social services and Bore chairman of economic development and the Labour group secretary, making them the most powerful political couple in the city. But sadly their dream ticket could be at an end. Bore has just moved out of the family home, leaving Hafeez to cope with hospitalisation for a badly broken nose all on her own.

AS BIRMINGHAM Tories limber up to take control of Britain's richest council, group leader Bernard Zissman is losing no time in throwing his weight around the city.

Just a week before standing up in the council chamber to call for a £20 million cut in council spending, with the loss of 1,000 jobs, Zissman was demanding that his own luxury town hall office be redecorated at a cost of £1,500.

Although the city's spendthrift Labour leaders surprisingly rejected his plea, the Tory leader shouldn't feel too hard done by: he often manages to wangle free accommodation at the prestigious Hyatt Hotel, which is partly owned by the council, and recently blagged free VIP treatment at the Hyatt's New York equivalent.

Whether Zissman plans to try to extend this hospitality with charge-payers' money to less-privileged locals, if and when he replaces Sir "Dick" Knowles as Birmingham council leader, remains to be seen.

A UNIQUE DIY redundancy scheme for councillors has been pioneered by Birmingham's former planning chairman, Frank McLoughlin.

As *Eye* readers will recall, McLoughlin lost the chair after a scathing ombudsman's report into why he allowed a fellow Labour councillor's planning application for a tandoori takeaway in the face of mass opposition from officers and residents. He imposed a party whip to ensure it got through.

McLoughlin also managed to obtain public funds for a trip to Italy to inspect safety precautions in football stadiums. His trip coincided with the 1990 world cup, and accidentally he was obliged to watch several football matches. Last year he lost his Erdington council seat, despite the enormous time he spent canvassing at the bar of the Royal Mail pub.

It was then that McLoughlin suddenly remembered all the expense claims he had not submitted to the council over previous years. He bunged in hundreds of claims, some dating back to 1989, for attendances at a variety of meetings, many fairly obscure, plus travel claims totalling 6,000 miles. All were paid even though McLoughlin had already made other claims for the years from 1989 onwards. Altogether he walked away with a pay-off of nearly £12,000.

ORKNEY

WHILE several Orkney Island Council representatives are sure to pick up thank-you-and-good-riddance awards at next year's elections, it is proving far harder to get rid of the officials.

Paul Lee, director of social services, continues to draw his not inconsiderable salary seven months after his department received unprecedented criticism in Lord Clyde's report of the infamous child-snatching operation of February 1991 (*Eyes passim*).

Perhaps he affords Clyde's report the same respect he gave to the one from the Cleveland inquiry. For he admitted, in evidence, that he hadn't read the Cleveland report. He managed, however, to avoid revealing how, on discovering only one day before he was due to testify in the Orkney inquiry that there wasn't a copy of the Cleveland report to be had anywhere in the area, he phoned Strathclyde social services with an urgent request for one to be faxed to him immediately. His request was refused point blank as the report ran to well over 300 pages.

Meanwhile Maihri Trickett, social services committee chairperson, continues to occupy her post despite her involvement in proceedings which have so far resulted in a £6 million inquiry and which are likely to cost a great deal more as the families concerned seek compensation.

Trickett received several nominations for Grovel's sought after Shit of the Year award when she suggested a further £25 should be added to the final poll tax bill. She said £25 was only the price of a night out — an argument that went down like a lead balloon in an area where many earn less than a pittance.

"There's a man from the council about the extension"

ROTTEN BOROUGHS (CONTINUED)

MANCHESTER

TROUBLE in Tameside, east Manchester, where the Labour council's capitalist wing, Tameside Enterprises Limited (TEL), is £1.5 million in debt.

TEL was set up by Tameside council to run homes for the elderly and other Thatch-threatened council services. The council has a 16 per cent stake in TEL, as does Ashton-under-Lyne Labour party; the rest comes under the jurisdiction of the Tameside Community Care Trust.

A highly incestuous web of Labour patronage links TEL's various wings, the council and local Labour parties. The trustees include local MPs Tom Pendry and Andrew Bennett; TEL's company secretary is failed prospective Labour MP Paul Stonier: Shirlie Stonier, Paul's wife, chairs Tameside council's social services committee. Although council leader Roy Oldham is no longer a TEL director, his wife Margaret works for it as a management consultant.

Despite its debts, TEL has made substantial staff loans to the favoured few. In 1991 Paul Stonier was granted a £16,000 loan, later repaid at a not very competitive 5 per cent. Another £1,744 was lent to assistant company secretary Simon Walker, a Labour Tameside Labour councillor, and a further £5,833 to another councillor's wife.

Yet with an uncharacteristic lapse of compassion, TEL's socialist directors blame the losses on old folk in TEL homes who won't die. Only residents who moved into the homes after they transferred from the council to TEL can be charged a new high rent which TEL claims from the DSS. TEL had budgeted for 314 new residents last year but only 255 new places came up, allegedly costing £860,000 in lost revenue. Perhaps councillors should slip something into the oldies' pie-and-faggots to make sure they keel over and allow in new residents who can pay the high rent.

MEANWHILE there have been curious happenings in Eastlands, the site of the city's proposed olympic stadium and velodrome.

As land is cleared to build new roads and lay foundations for the venues (the main stadium could be built even when/if Manchester loses its bid to house the games) local firms who stand in the way are being offered inducements to leave.

One such, Charlie Roberts' cash-and-carry firm on Ashton New Road, a discus throw from the site, was offered £1.25 million compensation by the city council to clear off so that the new Olympic Boulevard could be bulldozed through the premises.

In an area of record-breaking unemployment Roberts' business is an oddity: it employs 54 people and actually wants to expand. No problem, surely, given the olympic bid's commitment to protecting jobs and reviving the area?

A few weeks after Roberts had staked its claim to remain in Eastlands, the premises were mysteriously destroyed in two arson attacks. One of the Roberts clan, Ted, claims that he received an anonymous death threat. This was the cue for a sympathetic council to revise its compensation figure down to £850,000.

Meanwhile, the council wants to demolish 400 homes, known as the Tripe Colony, on the other side of the would-be olympics site. Unlike most of the local housing stock these are not 60s deck-access or high-rise disasters, but quality stock, some privately-owned, with a good community spirit. When Manchester's last bid to host the olympics at a different site failed four years ago, the same houses had just won home improvement grants and were deemed good for another 30 years.

But since the latest olympic site was chosen alongside them, things have changed. "Problem families" have been moved in and the municipal authorities no longer supply basic services like rubbish collection or policing. Recently, the council commissioned a survey which found that under the 1991 housing act those properties with ensuite bathrooms were unfit for human habitation. Now the council wants the whole estate bull-dozed, maintaining, of course, that the decision has nothing to do with the olympic bid.

HUNT NEWS

LAST MONTH the Hursley Hambledon foxhunt were thrown off the Clarendon House estate, near Salisbury, after the landowner, Andrew Christie-Miller, was told of violent clashes between hunt followers and saboteurs. Christie-Miller, a Wiltshire county councillor, told police that he is considering whether to ban the hunt next season.

The Hursley Hambledon had drafted in a band of hunt followers from the New Forest Foxhounds to supplement their own crew. One hunt follower was arrested by an acting police inspector early in the day, but managed to break free and leg it towards a waiting Land Rover during the confusion. Police may be interested in the verbal evidence of hunt saboteurs and video footage taken by them which identifies the absconder.

In one incident, a hunt follower accelerated his four-wheel drive vehicle towards a group of saboteurs in a lane. Most managed to scramble out of the way, but Mark Halford was hit by the car, which scooped him on to its bonnet and deposited him on the road at the next bend. Halford, on his first sabbing expedition, sustained a broken wrist, severe bruising and shock. Fellow saboteurs were able to record the registration number of the vehicle and a man, who claimed Halford had jumped out in front of his car in a threatening manner, has since been charged by police with actual bodily harm.

Later in the day a convoy of saboteurs' vans was ambushed and blockaded by hunt followers. A Portsmouth saboteur, Mark Delman, suffered a broken nose when a fence post was thrown through the windshield of his vehicle, while a minibus ferrying Bath hunt saboteurs was hemmed in by men armed with fence posts, shovels and rocks. They proceeded to smash windows and light fittings and damage the bodywork. The saboteur driving the minibus, Mark Freeman, was hit in the chest by a fence post, and the girl sitting next to him was hit on the beck of the head. Other saboteurs in the back were dragged out and beaten up when the hunt followers forced open the doors. Six saboteurs were taken to hospital in Salisbury.

All in all, not a great day for the reputation of the hunting fraternity.

'Reynard'

DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'New Muckspreader'

A NEAR-RIOT broke out recently in South Molton market, Devon, when a badly injured cow was left to bellow in pain for an hour.

When an angry crowd asked why the animal couldn't be put out of its agony, it had to be explained that this was not possible under new rules for "casualty slaughter" introduced by agriculture minister John Gummer and his state veterinary service (prop: Keith Meldrum). Similar heartrending scenes have taken place in recent weeks at markets in Yorkshire, Cumbria and elsewhere.

Farmers, meanwhile, are not sending their injured animals to slaughter for fear of being prosecuted. This follows an extraordinary court case brought against Somerset vet Roger Eddy. He had allowed a pig with an abscess in its hind leg to be sent to slaughter, only to be reported by one of Gummer's officials. He was prosecuted by Wiltshire county council and fined £,1500 with £1,500 costs.

The rules are causing such chaos — and suffering to animals — that even the august *Veterinary Times* has had difficulty finding words to sum up this latest Gummer-Meldrum catastrophe. It tried "bungle, botch, fiasco, ludicrous, preposterous, ridiculous and scandalous" before lapsing into speechlessness.

At a recent meeting of the council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the aggrieved Mr Eddy suggested that Meldrum should apologise publicly for his failure to produce guidelines on the new policy. Hardly surprisingly, Meldrum declined. "I do not make any apology in any respect whatsoever," he said.

And quite right, too. A man who has presided over the slaughter of three million chickens, before his salmonella control programme was finally abandoned, shouldn't have to apologise over something as trivial as causing unnecessary suffering to merely hundreds of animals.

SPEAKING of messes — and these days there are few better ways to describe John Gummer's empire — the dreaded IACS forms are now causing serious consternation on farms up and down the country.

IACS stands for "integrated administration and control system", but is also dubbed Instrument of Agony from the Civil Service. It is Gummer's answer to the Domesday Book, an attempt to control fraud in European Community farming subsidies.

After reading the 84-page explanatory booklet, farmers are expected to calculate their farmed acreage to within two decimal places, excluding roads, buildings, ponds, land occupied by electricity pylons and other non-cultivated areas. Reference must be made to the latest Ordnance Survey maps, which can cost farmers up to £500 and which, in many areas, are not yet available.

All details must be submitted on the approved forms by 15 May, a mere six weeks after the forms were issued. Penalties range from losing 1 percent of entitlement for each day that forms are late, to fines and imprisonment where inaccuracies are discovered. Not for farmers the luxury enjoyed by the agriculture ministry jobsworths who, more than three months late with their casualty slaughter guidelines, did not even consider that an apology was necessary.

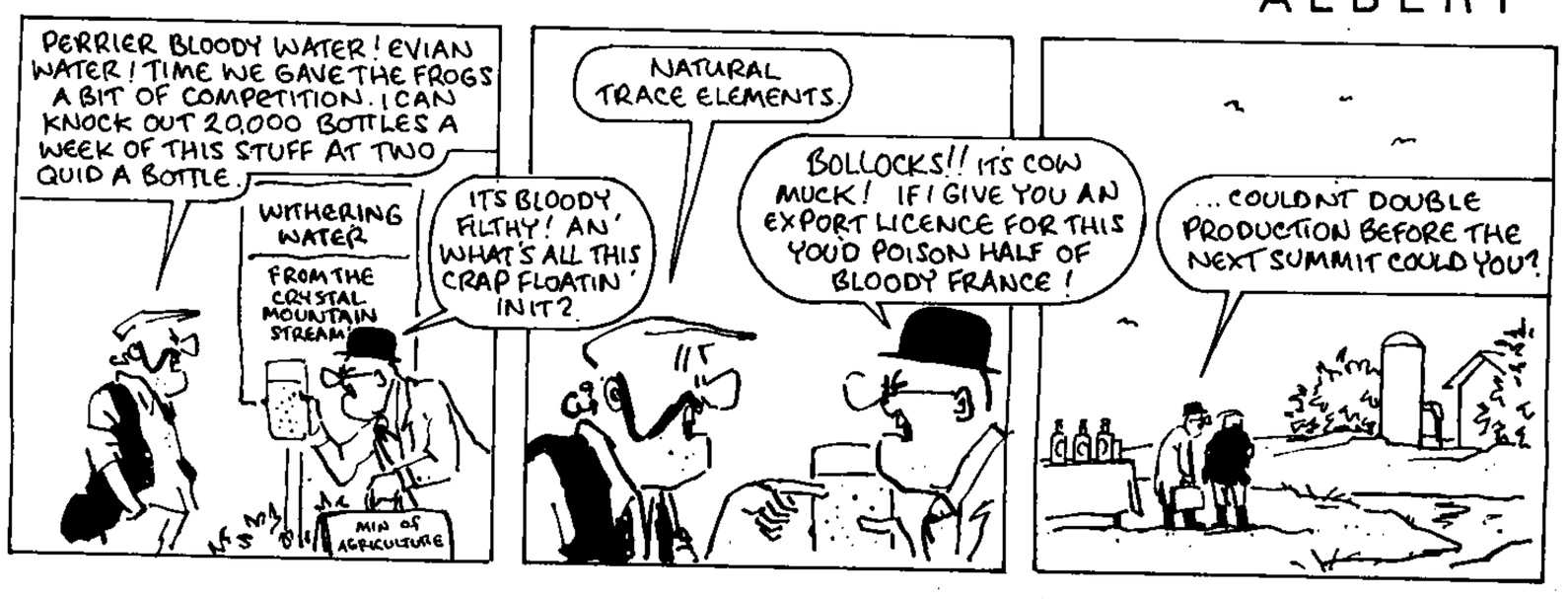
AS IF IACS were not enough, the word is that the beef special premium scheme, which requires all male cattle to be issued with "passports", has almost brought cattle trading to a halt.

At the main 49 livestock markets last week, fewer than 1,500 male cattle were sold, compared with more than 5,000 the previous week. The reason for the 70 percent shortfall is that, from 1 April, cattle must have been kept for two months before they can qualify for premium. However, because the ministry issued the "passports" too late, only a minority of producers were able to get the paperwork sorted out in time to market their cattle.

Small wonder that 24,000 people left farming last year and that, according to the Samaritans, farmers commit suicide at a rate of four a week.

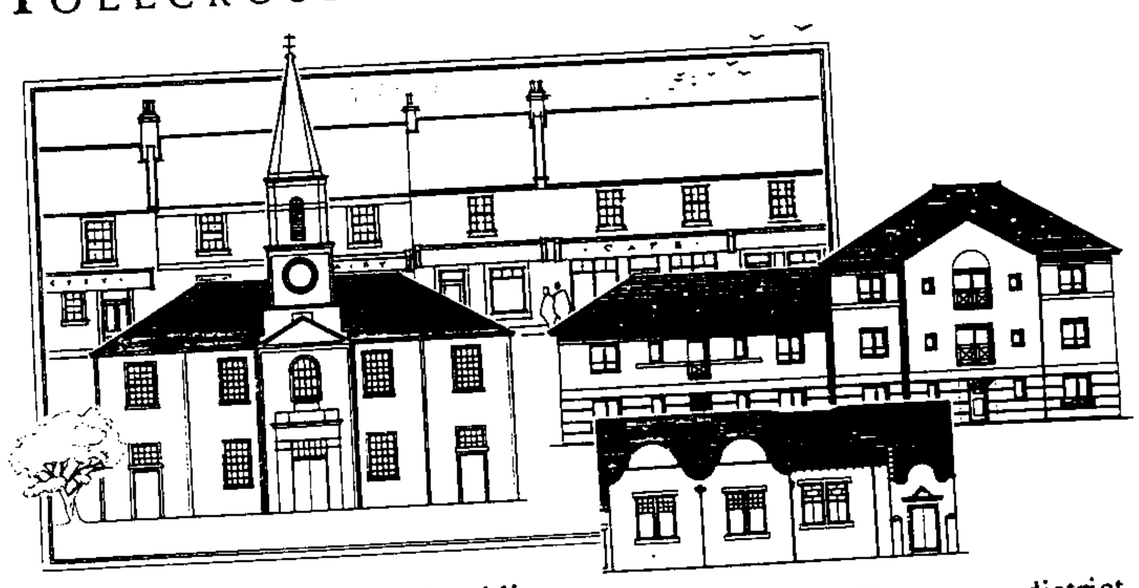
Old Macdonald

ALBERT


PERRIER BLOODY WATER! EVIAN WATER! TIME WE GAVE THE FROGS A BIT OF COMPETITION. I CAN KNOCK OUT 20,000 BOTTLES A WEEK OF THIS STUFF AT TWO QUID A BOTTLE.
WITHERING WATER
FROM THE CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN STREAM
MIN OF AGRICULTURE
ITS BLOODY FILTHY! AN' WHAT'S ALL THIS CRAP FLOATIN' IN IT?
NATURAL TRACE ELEMENTS.
BOLLOCKS!! ITS COW MUCK! IF I GIVE YOU AN EXPORT LICENCE FOR THIS YOU'D POISON HALF OF BLOODY FRANCE!
...COULDNT DOUBLE PRODUCTION BEFORE THE NEXT SUMMIT COULD YOU?

NOOKS and CORNERS

TOLLCROSS CENTRAL CHURCH AREA



GLASGOW, former city of culture, now boasts yet another museum: the St Mungo Museum of Religion, a collection of discarded candlesticks and old stained glass hastily cobbled together to fill a modern baronial pile which was originally intended to be the cathedral's "visitor centre" — until the cash ran out.

The interpretation of religious history on offer has been roundly condemned by, among others, the moderator of the Church of Scotland who has complained that "it seems to represent us solely in terms of conflict, when in fact we have done so much to promote ecumenical understanding, cooperation and effective action... the contribution to the life of Glasgow has been minimised and marginalised."

The real contribution of the Church of Scotland to Glasgow may easily be comprehended by the case of Tollcross parish church, one of scores of fine buildings abandoned by the Kirk in recent years. Tollcross, in the East End of the city, is as run down and bleak an area as one could hope to find. One of the few buildings to give any character to Tollcross was the old Central Church, a building originally built in the year of Trafalgar with a charming, later tower, all set back along with its jolly 1890s church hall from Tollcross Road in a walled churchyard. Such a building would be an asset and a focus in any community, but the Church of Scotland had closed it.

All was not lost. The Bridgegate Trust, now the Glasgow Building Preservation Trust, began negotiating with the Kirk in 1988 to take over the decaying church and hall. In 1990 a feasibility study was produced (with the help of public money from the then Scottish Development Agency) to show what could be done: a new use for the buildings to revitalise the depressed old village centre of Tollcross. The story now becomes traditional: in the good old Glasgow way, both church and hall then "went on fire".

This did not discourage the trust, but it reckoned without the curious ecumenical malevolence of the Church of Scotland which then sold the church hall to a local "businessman". For this, as it knew perfectly well, destroyed the economic viability of the trust's plans while creating new problems of access.

Even then, the trust did not give up and still hoped that the ruins of the church could be preserved within a cleaned-up graveyard. In 1992, after a public inquiry, the secretary of state for Scotland refused permission to the Church of Scotland to demolish what remained of Tollcross church. An offer was then made to hand over the ruins of the church and its tower, together with a "dowry" of some £12,000, to the city. Faced with such responsibility, Glasgow district council pursued a policy of masterly inactivity until its own building control officers visited the building in March, declared it unsafe and ordered its immediate demolition. Instead of revitalisation, therefore, further destruction and desolation is the city's gift to Tollcross.

Not for the first time, Glasgow's bold building control department has overruled not only the decisions of the council's conservation officers but also Historic Scotland and the secretary of state for Scotland. In fact, between them, in a remarkable ecumenical example of "cooperation, and effective action", the caring Kirk and the city of culture have succeeded in eliminating yet another of Glasgow's finite number of cultural monuments and have thus further impoverished the wretched inhabitants of the city's East End. Well done!

I CANNOT let an issue pass without referring to Vivian Clore's "long-time squeeze" (© *Taki, The Spectator, 20 March*), ***Jocelyn de Stevens, CVO. The problem facing nice Mr Brooke, the heritage minister, is, of course, how to get rid of him.***

One solution is suggested by English Heritage's "equal opportunities policy statement" printed in *Scan* ***(the quango's house mag) No 79: "Any employee who discriminates in any way or who harasses any other employee on the grounds of religion, race, gender, sexual orientation or*** *disability* ***[my italics] may be liable to formal disciplinary procedure. In serious cases, such behaviour may be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and as such may result in summary dismissal."***

Readers will recall *(Eye 813)* ***the chairman's outrageous behaviour to John Anstey, the vertically challenged polio victim, for Vivian's "squeeze", having thrown the Committee for the Future of London's Architectural Heritage out of his office, bawled down the corridor: "What do you mean by coming here with that little man?"***

If that does not constitute "gross misconduct" by a senior public figure, I do not know what does. But I am encouraged by Taki's observation that: "The trouble with Clore and Stevens is that they both can dish it out, but squeal like stuffed pigs when it's dished back."

'Piloti'

SECRECY

WHY IS THE government so embarrassed about the arrest in the United States of "Michael Austin" on charges connected with the murder last year of Lancashire accountant David Wilson, and the continuing publicity given to "Austin" in the *Observer*?

Surely ministers and the Lancashire police will be delighted to have "Austin" extradited to Britain and charged with Wilson's highly-publicised murder?

Doubts at all levels have been prompted by the fact that Austin is better known by other names: notably "Hector Portillo"; "Colonel Portillo"; or plain "Gomez". He called himself Gomez in Brussels in the summer of 1987 when he tried to get a British security consultant, who has since died, to carry out three contract killings on behalf of his masters, whom he claimed were the security services of the government of the Dominican Republic.

Was Gomez/Austin/Portillo also connected to the British security services? Was he prepared to carry out contract killings for them as well? If so, this could explain the large number of former SAS men interviewed by police investigating Wilson's murder.

An even more horrible possibility — suggested by documents uncovered by American police at one of "Austin's" numerous properties — is that the mysterious "estate agent" (as he liked to be known) was linked to the Chilean arms dealer Cardoen, who is at the centre of the arms-for-Saddam scandal. What could be worse than a truculent and very rich defendant in a murder trial suddenly, from the witness box, spilling the beans about contract killings for the security services and how he helped to arm the world's greatest tyrant on behalf of upright British companies and their shareholders?

There are some cynics who say that it is far better that a possible murderer should never be brought to trial than that such vital state secrets should be publicised.

POLICE 5

A YEAR-LONG internal investigation by the notorious West Midlands police has revealed that "staff" at Britain's second biggest force have been stealing cash found at the homes of dead people.

The money was taken from police stations where it was supposed to be locked up "for safety". The report also says that cash handed in by the public, along with lost property, were also filched.

Whereas an ordinary citizen committing similar crimes might expect to be charged and prosecuted, the force has simply told those responsible to pay the money back — while refusing to identify the miscreants. What can chief constable Ron "Biffo"(*) Hadfield be afraid of? More bad publicity, perhaps.

Meanwhile senior West Midlands officers are trying to extract another £250,000 of taxpayers' money from their local police authority — to build themselves a better social club.

A ridiculously bland report to police authority members says the club is used by the force for training purposes and needs a £1 million refurbishment — with a quarter coming from the region's council taxpayers.

The reality is rather different. Top officers want the cash because their soccer team has been promoted, but to play in the new league they need a bigger stand and better flood-lighting. They could never say that of course — so in the report the new stand is described as a "conservatory", albeit a massively big one. A changing room is said to be necessary to improve sports facilities and build "team spirit" in the force. In fact, without it the police team cannot compete in the league.

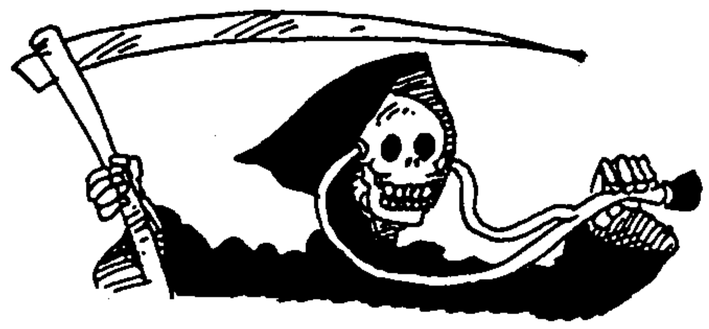
West Midlanders will no doubt be proud that they have a force which is as efficient at robbing the living as it is the dead.

* *Biffo*: Witty, West Midlands police force nickname for Ron Hadfield. Derivation? Big Ignorant Fat Fucker from Oldham.

THE £20,000 blue Mercedes used to ferry Derek Hatton to and from Mold crown court has been blown up by the bomb squad.

It was left unattended behind Liverpool's Queen Elizabeth II law courts over Easter with new number plates and no tax discs, thus giving the knackers due cause to blow it away.

The Merc's previous owner, solicitor David Phillips, had just sold the car to his brother-in-law and traded up to this year's model. He could afford to do so because of the substantial legal fees earned by Liverpool lawyers for representing Degsy and pals. The insurance company can also expect a hefty claim for Phillips' exploded G-reg cast-off.



DOING THE ROUNDS

LAST YEAR'S London ambulance service (LAS) computer cock-up caused fatalities and prompted the resignation of chief executive Jim Harris. Now that the government has scrapped the entire LAS board the service has become directly answerable to South West Thames regional health authority... which numbers among its members a Mr Jim Harris.

● AS THE great **Wessex** computer scandal unfolds (*Eye* 816), it is apparent that the department of health was given ample warning of the impending £63 million disaster. Indeed, the department has now conceded that its auditors sent three alarming reports to the secretary of state calling for a halt to the project. Despite this, Wessex RHA was advised by then health minister David Mellor to "press ahead without delay".

● EVERY YEAR 40,000 patients use the 24-hour casualty service at **London's St Bartholomew's Hospital**, but not for much longer. The accident department is due to be replaced by a primary healthcare centre, open from 8am to 8pm. Patients should refrain from having heart attacks at night.

● JUNIOR doctors' accommodation continues to cause problems, despite the recommendations of Virginia Bottomley's "new deal". The married quarters at **Newcastle General hospital** have no tables or comfortable chairs, and it has taken three months to fix the doorless oven. The on-call rooms at **Ealing NHS Trust** are 500 yards from the main hospital, the connecting paths are badly lit and unsafe at night. The rooms are noisy, there are few washing facilities, sheets are not changed between occupants and there is a paucity of pillows. It can take two hours to track down a room key and there is no food available for staff after 8pm. In **Belfast**, it takes 15 minutes of manual tap pressure to fill a doctor's bath at the **City hospital**, and the on-call rooms at nearby **Mater hospital** are situated at the wrong end of the infamous Crumlin Road.

● MANAGERS at **Oxford's John Radcliffe hospital** have abandoned plans to charge patients for meals to reduce a £1.7 million deficit. However, they still intend to eliminate overtime, charge staff for car-parking and convert an NHS ward into a private one.

● **BRADFORD Hospitals NHS Trust** has spent £100,000 on Egyptian pillars and mood lighting at the entrance of **Bradford Royal Infirmary**. The money might have been better spent on making the BRI's antiquated ward toilets more user-friendly. Meanwhile, part of the Smith Lane visitors' car park has been seconded for staff use only, forcing patients to park half a mile away.

● **Northern regional health authority** has sacked 192 of the 320 staff at its **Newcastle** headquarters, as part of a "streamlining" programme. Long-serving members of staff were given five-minute appointments to be told they were superfluous, but were allowed to work out their notices. Computer staff were given 15 minutes to clear out of the building for fear that someone might pass on a virus or two. The sackings follow the unexplained redundancy of RHA chairman Douglas Haig.

● **STOKE MANDEVILLE hospital** in **Buckinghamshire** has postponed an ear operation on a seven-year-old boy for a year because his GP is not a fundholder and the district health authority has run out of cash. The boy, often in pain, will be reassured by general manager Ken Cunningham's view that "pain is a very difficult thing to define". Mr Cunningham was also keen to rule out the suggestion of inequality: "It's not a two-tier system. It's two systems. The two systems work at different rates."

● IN **EDINBURGH**, the **Royal Hospital for Sick Children** is having to rely on charitable donations to raise £10 million for a much-needed extension and extra incubators. Meanwhile, **Lothian health board** has been handing out new BMWs to its senior managers "to attract the right calibre of staff".

● THE ROW over **Taunton hospital's** costly new helipad rumbles on. The pad, which is the size of an atom and perilously close to the casualty department, has failed an RAF inspection and cannot be used. Major casualties and those collecting donated organs will now have a brisk trot to the hospital from a temporary pad in Galmington playing fields.

● AT **COVENTRY'S Walsgrave hospital**, an emergency bed shortage forced a consultant to do his ward-round in the corridor. Some patients waited up to eight hours to be given a bed, while others were diverted to Rugby. Meanwhile, short-contract ambulance drivers in Coventry have been offered a generous package by the new **West Midlands Ambulance Service Trust**: a £3,000-a-year pay cut.

Birmingham's General Hospital has closed

"You're going to insert a catheter! Are you trying to take the piss?"

to emergencies while it undergoes "refurbishments" (ie multiple service cuts and redundancies), leaving the accident departments at **Heartlands** and **Dudley Road Hospital** to take on the extra workload. Meanwhile, bed shortages at the **Midland Centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology** in **Smethwick** have forced a patient to have life-saving neurosurgery at the private **Priory hospital** in **Edgbaston**.

The attempt by the discredited **West Midlands RHA** to hide the performance league tables for local hospitals has not been helped by their publication in the Birmingham *Evening Post*. It appears that residents of **Sandwell** are three times more likely to die at operation than those in **Dudley**, while people in **Wolverhampton** are two and a half times more likely to be readmitted to hospital within days of discharge than those in **Solihull**. **Redditch's Alexandra hospital** and the **Hereford County Hospital** are most likely to cancel out-patient appointments. The furore surrounding the tables, whether accurate or not, is likely to be amplified when Mrs Bottomley reveals her national league later this year.

● LAST YEAR, **Bristol Royal Infirmary** lost much of the equipment in its vascular laboratory when Mr Michael Horrocks, the senior vascular surgeon, defected to **Bath's Royal United Hospital** to become a professor (*Eye* 791). The stealthy prof also took his legendary communication skills with him; so much so that all of the theatre nurses at the RUH have now requested a half-day to coincide with his Tuesday afternoon operating list. Meanwhile, tetchy orthopod Mr Philip Bliss delayed the start of an operation for 45 minutes because he couldn't find his shoe.

M.D.

IT SEEMS that Sir Robert (who for some reasons calls himself Robin) Buchanan is upset by recent articles in the *Independent*, *Computer Weekly* and the *Eye* about the multi-million pound computer scandal at the Wessex regional health authority, of which he is chairman.

Speaking to authority members last month, Sir Robin said press reports had put a strain on his family life. The profound and unanimous distress of his underlings was then expressed in the most grovelling terms by Wessex RHA's vice-chairman, Alistair Service (sic). "It is bitterly unfair that you should have been attacked for this," he drooled. "The criticism of your role seems to us a classic case of those brought in to clean up a mess being blamed for it."

If Mr Service would read the reports he blames more carefully, he would notice that nothing was done to "clean up" the computer scandal until the appointment of a new general manager for Wessex RHA in 1990. Sir Robin took over as chairman in 1988 and enthusiastically backed the RISP computer system for more than a year.

Nor was Sir Robin a stranger to health authorities. Before taking over Wessex he had been chairman of Bath district health authority for six years. As in the rest of the national health service, an important qualification for these posts was unswerving support for the Conservative party, which Sir Robin served loyally for many years in the city of Bath. It was there that he caught the eye of the local MP, an influential Tory who rose to become party chairman and governor of Hong Kong — His Excellency Sir Christopher Patten GCMG etc.

WHAT is an "super primary destination"? Translated from the original department of transportspeak, it simply means places like London that are regarded as having a certain importance.

Also included in the category are Britain's major sea and air ports. Well, nearly all. For some reason the historic name of Folkestone is currently being removed from motorway and road signs to be replaced with the splendid legend "Eurotunnel".

Eurotunnel's elevation to "super primary destination" status marks a disturbing move in signposting history and opens the way for *any* commercial undertaking to apply for a similar classification.

The words "Channel tunnel" could legitimately have been used on the road signs, but instead it has been decided to use Sir Alastair Morton's company name instead. The best explanation is that it is to help mollify the owners of Eurotunnel in the wake of the refusal — so far — to grant them a duty-free booze 'n' fags concession.

Defending the decision, a DoT spokesperson said it had all been sorted out 10 years ago. This is rubbish: then, the tunnel was barely conceived; ferry services out of Folkestone were set to expand; the town was to be developed as a tourist and commercial centre; and the DoT was not even constituted in its current form.

WORRIES mount at British Gas headquarters, near Vauxhall Bridge, about the increasingly bizarre demands of chairman Bob Evans.

Evans is now asking for a special staircase to take him from his office on the 14th floor to the directors' restaurant on the 16th. The problem, he explains, is that at present he is obliged to use the lifts or the existing stairs. This means he may bump into other people who work for British Gas but are not as important as the chairman.

Some say that if Evans goes on making this sort of demand, his days as chairman may be numbered.

"Many happy tax returns, Your Majesty!"

Letters

Facts

Sir,

The person who stole a personal letter faxed from the USA relating to the selection of a fellow for the World Press Institute (published by you Friday, 9 April) with the clear intention of seeking to embarrass a distinguished Fleet Street editor, may care to know the outcome of this courageous act.

The programme director, who has worked unstintingly in the interests of journalists internationally, has felt obliged to resign, and the prospective fellow in question has honourably withdrawn his candidacy.

I have only one message for the document thief: I hope you feel proud of yourself.

Sincerely,
GARRY LLOYD,

Kingston upon Thames, Surrey.

Hove too

Sir,

Rotten Boroughs — Hove: 9 April 1993

Your cynical attitude on Hove's attitude to the football club in its midst may have had some merit if it had been based on fact.

There is an increasing younger element in the population of the borough and those elected to its council.

Your figures of valuations and debts of the football club bear no relationship to those quoted to the council.

There is no new stadium site in Hove and consequently no resultant potential traffic problems.

The council did not claim that there would be increased noise from a superstore development on the football ground site.

The council did envisage problems with the Sainsbury's Homebase nearby and refused planning permission. Consent was subsequently granted by the secretary of state's inspector after a public inquiry.

Tim Sainsbury, the MP for Hove, was not involved in the application and his position did not influence the borough's planning committee.

Your article is totally unfounded and grossly misleading.

Yours sincerely,
CLLR R J. ALLEN,

Chairman: Planning & Development Committee, Hove Borough Council, Sussex.

Human wrongs

Sir,

Inayat Bunglawala, "member of the human rights committee of the Muslim parliament", complains (EYE 817) of western double standards over democracy for Muslims. He very properly criticises dictators and tyrants in the Muslim world, mentioning Mubarak's Egypt, Saddam's Iraq, Suharto's Indonesia and the shah's Iran.

But strangely, he doesn't mention any little problems with human rights in Iran since the time of the shah — even though some of the policies of subsequent Iranian regimes make that old despot look like a wet liberal.

Could this case of seeming double standards be related to the fact that the (self-appointed) "Muslim parliament" is actually one of the front organisations of the infamous Muslim Institute (supporters of the murder of Salman Rushdie), which seems to get its funding from sources not a million miles from the current Iranian theocracy?

Yours for human rights consistently,
KEITH LUCAS,

London WC1.

The Bennion-Gabb Letters Part 94

Sir,

Turning the other cheek, let me quietly say (1) I'm glad Sean Gabb (Letters, EYE 816) admires THE SEX CODE; (2) When I used the word touting I had no "venom" towards him. My criticism was justified however.

The OED defines touting as soliciting custom. Mr Gabb's earlier letter (EYE 814) invited readers to retain his services "on payment of the appropriate fee". In another of my books, PROFESSIONAL ETHICS, I wrote, citing judicial authority: "the professional man must submit to such 'elementary' restraints as prohibition against advertising and touting".

Difficult though Mr Gabb may find this to believe, it really was solely from a sense of obligation that I warned EYE readers about how he failed in his duty as secretary of Tories for Ethical Sex (TOES). Perhaps he has forgotten just how inefficient he was. As it would be tedious to set out here, I'll drop him a line to jog his memory.

Somewhere Mr Gabb has read that the best form of defence is attack. He doesn't attempt to answer my criticisms of him, but instead attacks me. The difference is that his attack is without foundation.

I'll let it pass for now, but I might not be so lenient next time.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS BENNION,

Oxford.

This correspondence is now closed on the grounds of boredom. Ed.

Des res

Sir,

Has anyone noticed the remarkable similarity between estate agents' flowery descriptions, which the government plans to regulate, and its own unrealistic claims? An estate agent describing a property it is eager to off-load as "needing slight attention" really means "it's in ruins". Similarly, HM government with a health service it is eager to get rid of portrays it as "giving a better service to more people than ever before". This also means "it's in ruins". I wonder if perhaps they are in some way related? I think we should be told.

Yours sincerely,
A.F. VINCE,

South Croydon, Surrey.

Reproductive organ

Sir,

Rotten Boroughs, 817

Only you are in a position to tell your readers whether your Sheffield correspondent is simply incompetent or congenitally incapable of reproducing the truth.

At least the item on 9 April only contained five errors of fact — this was an improvement since his/her previous contribution had 14! — but maintained the strike rate of two lies per column inch. Obviously s/he deserves some sort of award for consistency.

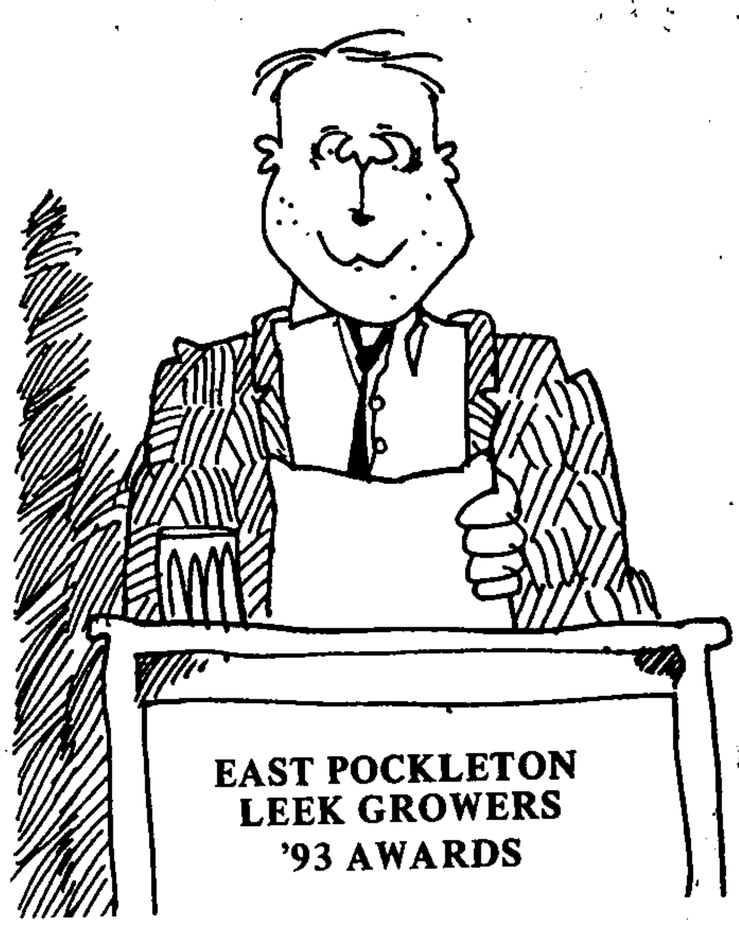
However, there is a story in there somewhere. For the first time in living memory, at the council meeting held on 7 April, representatives of all political parties deplored the disgraceful reporting of the local newspaper (THE STAR) on this item.

The Press Complaints Commission is also investigating numerous complaints about THE STAR's deliberate attempt to mislead people on this matter — obviously successful in your correspondent's case.

I'm prepared to put my name to my contribution. When is your correspondent going to have the guts to do the same? Or, couldn't s/he even get that right?

Yours sincerely,
HOWARD KNIGHT,

Sheffield.



And the winner is... EMMA THOMPSON!"

Going spare

Sir,

In a spare moment (and as a BBC Radio Engineer recently made redundant by John Birt's Producer Choice fiasco, I've got lots of spare moments) I discovered that British Broadcasting Corporation is an anagram of the timely warning:

OI! BIRT AND CO!
CORP-BASHING TRAITORS!

I wonder if any other ex-BBC employees could discover more hidden messages? Helpful hint: You can get words like "bastard", "git" and "prat" out of the letters provided.

Yours,
L. DORADO.

Lookalike

Margaret

Marilyn

Sir,

Have other readers noticed the striking similarity between the late, lamented Marilyn Monroe and the lately demented Baroness Thatcher? If these two blonde bombshells are related, I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
LYNNE BOOTH,

Bristol.

Children's Hour

Sir,

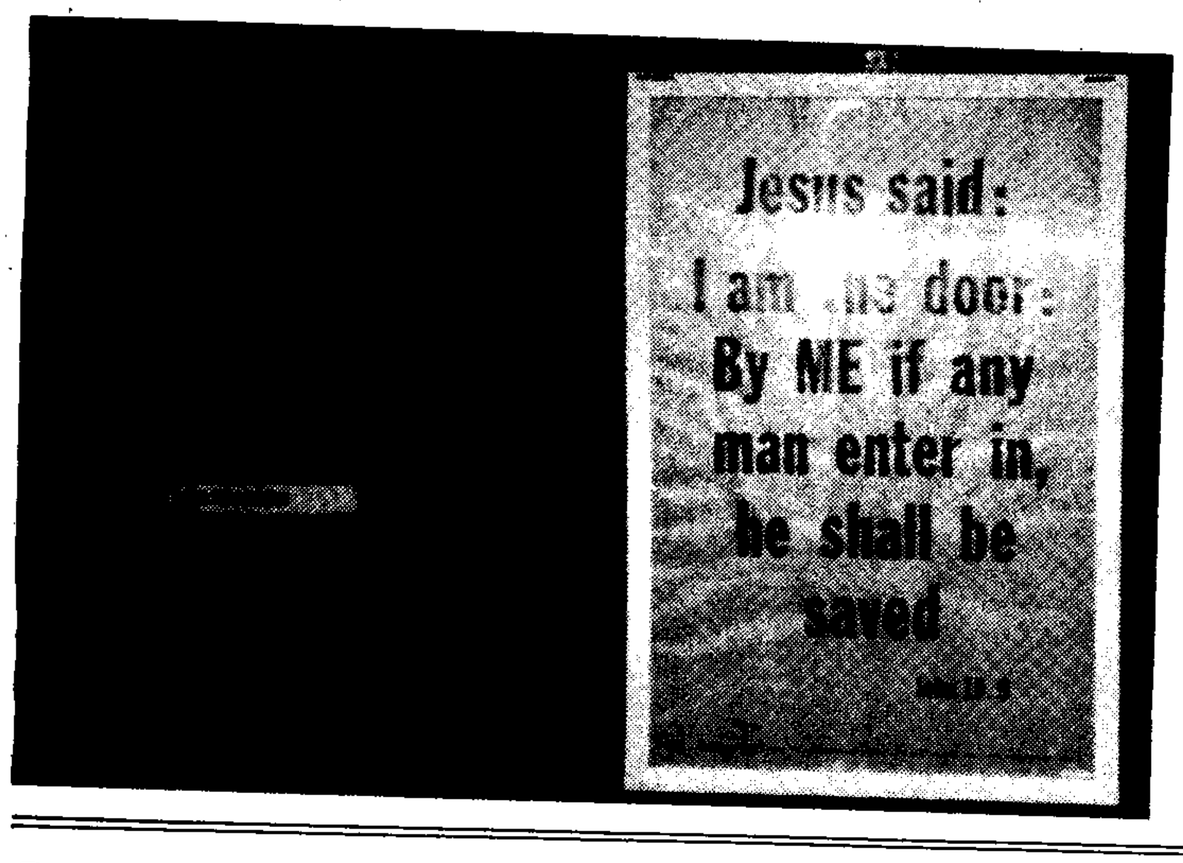
As a member of the "Whitehouse Set" (religious bigot etc), I would like to support the programme planners for putting the last episode of CASUALTY on an hour later.

My 8-year-old son (and 7-year-old daughter) both watch this series every week. I recorded the episode on video and after some reflection let him watch it (twice). I also let him watch 15-rated videos after I have edited them (fair enough, uh!?)

Yours sincerely,
CONCERNED FATHER,

Lisburn, Co. Antrim.

I-SPY



Submitted by M. Taylor. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Puff

Sir,

Lord Wyatt may not be as wrong as you imply in saying that there is evidence that smoking "prevents disease and death".

There is indeed such evidence, but in the present climate of opinion the anti-smoking industry has it almost entirely its own way, and anyone who dares to suggest that there is something to be said on the other side is shrieked down (a situation in which we might have expected PRIVATE EYE *to display a little of its famous capacity to doubt the conventional view?)*

Smokers have a lowered risk of diabetes, Parkinson's disease, intestinal cancer, trigeminal neuralgia, tumours in the central nervous system, and above all of Alzheimer's disease (which, with all you healthy people living longer and longer, is the curse of the age). So unless you have a passion for spending your last years in the horrors of the geriatric ward, it makes sense to smoke.

Yours faithfully,
MRS J.S. HATTON,

Teddington, Middx.

Panel list

Sir,

Congratulations on introducing the fascinating Notes & Queries format into the EYE *(817). I think I have the answer to the question as to what Donald Trelford does all day. Recently I received a letter from the* OBSERVER *thanking me for my participation in their 500-strong readers panel and assuring me that I would soon notice changes in the paper. Needless to say, although I have been known to communicate my views on the* OBSERVER *to the editor, I am not now and never have been a member of its readers panel. Perhaps Mr Trelford will stop sending out such letters at random and get on with editing the paper. Or, on second thoughts, perhaps he had better not.*

Yours sincerely,
KEITH FLETT,

London N17.

Worse form possible

Sir,

Can I just add my twopenny worth to the debate on old "Pip" Larkin that was so admirably expounded in your Literary Review (817)? Perhaps I shall put it in verse form:

How the poet spends his hours
We should not care a bit.
Do we think any less of the flowers
Coz they grow in a field of shit?

Yours faithfully,
JONATHAN WEEKS,

East Lambrook, Somerset.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Wigan edging farther and nearer to Wembley now..."
RAY FRENCH, BBC1
(Eileen & Doug Marsden)

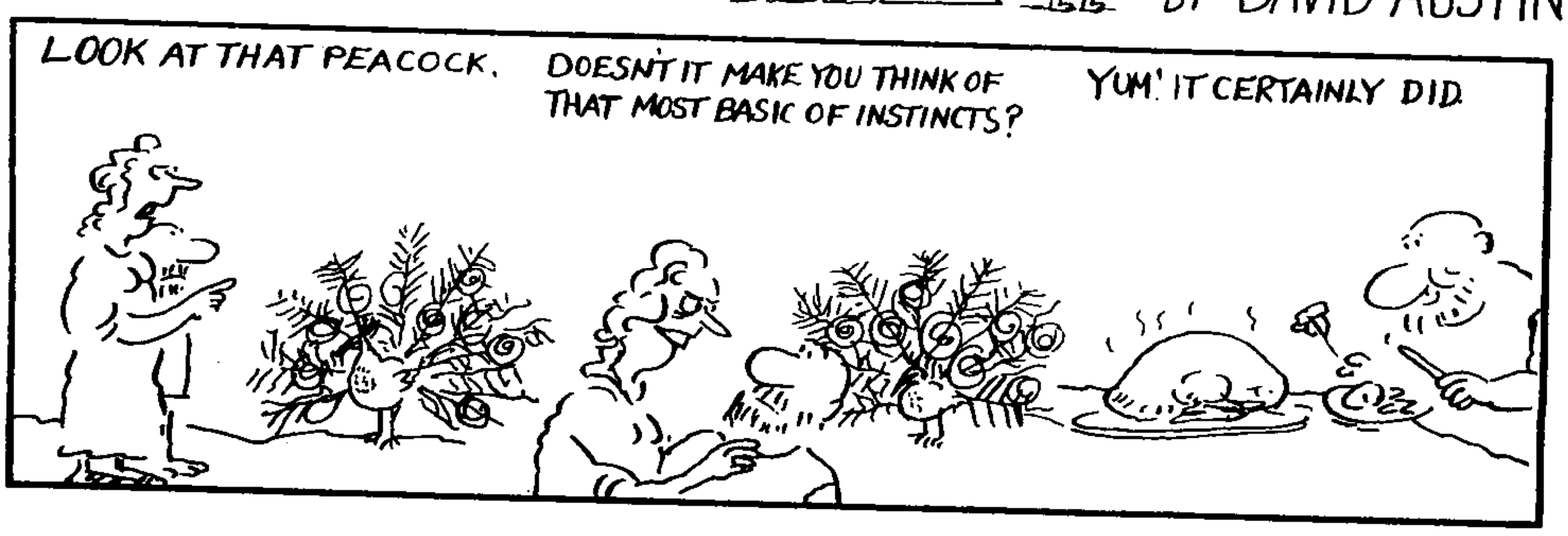
"34-year-old Alan Cork steps up to take the penalty. Thin on top but thick in mind and body."
COMMENTATOR, Radio 5
(Nick Quarmby)

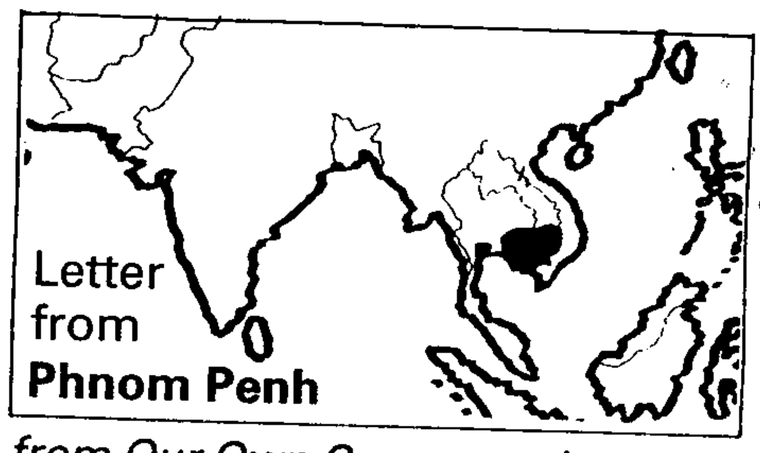
Ross King: *So, tell me, do you have a girlfriend at school?*
Young boy: *No.*
Ross King: *Oh, come on, there must be someone you've got your eyes on!*
Young boy: *I go to a boys' school.*
Radio 5 Phone-In
(A.C. Garnsworthy)

"... the Moroccan-born Nayim scored his second goal... and the Spanish-born Nayim made it a hat-trick as he scored his third goal."
BILL McFARLAND, BBC1
(Skanda Vaitilingam)

"It's a drip, drip, drip chipping away at the BBC."
HAMISH McCRAE, LBC
(Giles Chapman)

HOM SAP





from Our Own Correspondent

LADY THATCHER'S comments on Bosnia and her "accomplices-to-massacre" jibe at western leaders drew hollow laughter here in Cambodia.

For with the full connivance of the United Nations and its "peace" plan, the groundwork for which was laid when Thatch still ruled the world, the unthinkable is really happening: the Khmer Rouge are being allowed to regain power — they who slaughtered more than a million of their countrymen in the Killing Fields of the 1970s.

Lady Thatcher, in attacking her successors, also saw fit to paraphrase Churchill, saying that there has to be a moral basis to foreign policy. From our perspective, this was a sick joke.

When the Khmer Rouge butchers were driven out by the Vietnamese in 1978, we thought we'd seen the last of them. How wrong we were. First, they were recognised as the official government of Cambodia in exile, while the Vietnamese-backed government in Phnom Penh was isolated, ostracised and starved of vital development aid — the *only* government in the world to be denied such aid.

The Khmer Rouge, however, *were* given aid: their troops were fed on the Thai/Cambodia border, while ordinary Cambodians starved and went without clean drinking water. Most incredible of all, the Khmer Rouge were given military training: first by American special forces — then by the British SAS who took over in 1986 [UK prop: M. Thatcher], when Irangate made further US involvement in training mass killers look unwise.

The SAS, many of whom found training the Khmer Rouge repugnant, taught them to lay booby traps, blow up bridges and railways and lay anti-personnel mines which maim rather than kill. The barbaric aim was to blow off as many people's (especially children's) arms and legs as possible and so lower morale and put an impossible strain on a badly stretched health service. No doubt the young victims also believe foreign policy should have a moral basis.

Later, even when the Vietnamese withdrew unconditionally from Cambodia in 1989, the west continued to support the bogus "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea" which, as has often been said, is *not* a government, *not* democratic and *not* in Kampuchea. It is little more than the Khmer Rouge in disguise. Under Thatch, and then more recently John Major, you in Britain voted for the KR in the years 1979-1982 and for the KR-dominated coalition from 1982-1991.

The cure-all for Cambodia was devised under the UN's auspices: a "fully comprehensive political settlement", the bureaucrats call it, which includes as two of its signatories Khieu Samphan, Pol Pot's righthand man and an accredited mass murderer, and Son Sen, the Khmer Rouge foreign minister who has a death list with *two million* names on it. It is as if a "peace plan" for the reunited Germany gave roles to Martin Bormann and old Joe Mengele.

When Khieu Samphan returned to Phnom Penh last year after a 13-year absence, people showed their admiration and respect by nearly lynching him. Only an appeal from prime minister Hun Sen saved his life. Despite the obvious antipathy to Khieu Samphan, UN "peacekeepers" insist on calling him "Your Excellency" as if he were royalty. He has now fled the city, fearing for his safety. The 60,000-strong UN team, meanwhile, also acts like royalty. They strut round like an imperial force, with their own exotic food, luxury villas, taxis, rickshaws and brothels, while our poor starve and are denied access to clean drinking water.

Moreover, Cambodians are now the *most disabled people in the world*, due to the millions of anti-personnel mines that litter the country — mainly in the rice paddies where people *have* to work to live. The UN has done virtually nothing to clear the mines and some of its members have said cynically that the best way to remove them is by Cambodians stepping on them.

Elections are due next month to determine who rules Cambodia and — incredibly — the west seems to believe the Khmer Rouge will abide by the results. Already they have killed more than 100 ethnic Vietnamese, including a baby and a 12-year-old girl, as well as six UN officials — all *before* the elections. God knows how many will die if civil war erupts when the UN pulls out after the elections.

TRUE STORIES

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

DURING his interview, Mr Christopher Philips, press officer for the Congletown Football Club, said: "We decided to honour the memory of Fred Cope, who was a fan of Congletown for over 50 of his 85 years. We printed an obituary in our programme and our Secretary, John Pullen, used the loudspeakers to call for all present before the kick-off to rise for a minute's silence in tribute to our oldest supporter. But, to everyone's embarrassment, Fred appeared in the stand halfway through the minute's silence and asked what the fuss was about. But John came to the rescue and the moment he spotted Fred came on the speakers and announced that the silence was for Bobby Moore. After that we gave Fred an easy chair and a copy of the programme as a souvenir. Everyone was pleased when he won the half-time raffle."

Bert Kitchen

ASKED to explain why the Singaporean parrot, Morris, fetched such a high price, Nawaz Muhammad Khan, the wealthiest dealer in beauty birds at the Taif pigeon souk, said: "It was the signs of intelligence and of noble descent that can be seen in Morris's eyes that made so many experts long to own him at all costs. Finally it went to Sheikh Abdul Al-Akkas, a noted poet, for 35,000 Rials — but this figure was reached only after Morris had given his two favourite calls: 'Long live the police!' and 'Peanuts please!' "

DR VICTOR Kinsalide, a Nigerian rheumatologist, has been charged with fraud after managing to collect £1,400 over the counters of nine Dublin banks while pretending to be Shang Way Seng, a Chinese student. Dr Kinsalide is to be charged under his own name: Tannethfaroyonen Sancannock.

MRS DAPHNE Williams, the owner of 75a 51st Street, New York, is being sued by Mr James Archer, whose brother, William, a derelict, lost his life when number 75a, in which he was sleeping, collapsed. "But I am not worried," she said. "Under State law, Mr Archer has to prove that he was financially harmed by his brother's death."

PRETTY Wendy Aminini, a schoolgirl attending Lamontville High, said: "We were all in the playground when this very handsome young man appeared with a mini-hailer in his hand. 'Girls,' he said. 'Girls, you are all to run round the playground shouting "Harry Gulf is mad — completely mad — and we are all running away from him." ' So we all ran round and round as fast as we could, shouting out that stuff about Harry Gulf. Then Donna Share, our head-girl, stopped and said: 'What are we running for? He's only a crazy man.' Then we all went back into Assembly where we heard that no one had been hurt and that Harry Gulf *was* a crazy man. But by that time he had gone."

INFORMATION: Stoke Evening Sentinel 1.3.93; Saudi Gazette 9.1.93; Cork Examiner 23.3.93; Globe & Mail 6.1.93; Sunday Tribune (Durban) 1.3.93. MONITORS: K. McClair, D. Tale, Brendan J. O'Byrne, Anon,.Greg Pearce.

THOMAS

THE PRIVATISED TANK ENGINE

Thomas is grounded

THOMAS had seen plenty of scruffy things since coming to work in the big city, but nothing compared with the squat train who was sliding to a stop beside him.

"Good God, train! Don't you ever wash in the mornings?" asked Thomas. "And get yourself a coat of paint. You won't attract any passengers until you buck up."

But at that instant Terry the Tube Train's doors slid open and hundreds of passengers surged forward, fighting to get on board.

"Huh," said Thomas in disgust. "The people in this city have such low standards. I'd take a bus if I were them."

"You won't get far on a bus these days, guv," said Terry. "Deregulated last month, they was."

"Well, I suppose you're the ideal product for this riff-raff," admitted Thomas. "Cheap and cheerful."

" 'Ang a banger, mate. Cheap and cheerful? I'll 'ave you know it's 90p just to the next stop, and the last time someone laughed hon a tube train was in 1972. Soon got 'is 'ead kicked hin, of course." There were screams as Terry's doors rolled shut on passengers trying to board.

"So what old slum are you off to this morning, my friend?" asked Thomas.

"Slum?" yelled Terry as his motors began to whir. "You'd call the country's biggest hairport a slum, would yer?" Bursting at the seams, he slid into his tunnel. A woman's head was trapped by the neck in the doors.

"Put me onto the airport line," Thomas ordered his driver. "Let's get in some free-market competition. I'll beat him squarely on speed, comfort, price, capacity, convenience and customer care."

"No you won't Thomas. There's no surface rail link."

"How ridiculous! We were ready to build it years ago."

"But we have to wait for the private sector to borrow the money."

"Ah yes, of course. But why can't the public sector raise money for a rail project like this? It's bound to recover its costs pretty quickly, after all."

"Well, Thomas, the answer to that one is ... er ..."

And they thought about it all day. And the next day.

They still haven't come up with any sort of answer.

BLUE PETER PRESENTER SPLITS WITH DARLING BUDS STAR

"... and that one's got to be back before midnight"

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

She has gone too far this time. I refer of course to the woman I never refer to. She has been going on every television station saying that I am feeble and indecisive. I am not sure what to do about this, but Mr Hurd as ever has the answer.

"Ignore her," he told me. "She is completely mad and no one pays any attention to her."

This is good advice and besides there are considerably more pressing matters to deal with, i.e. the Maastricht Treaty and of course the train strike which could mean no one coming to the Cabinet meeting on Friday. I have informed the Cabinet that I will not tolerate absenteeism on the scale of last time. Oh no. It is simply giving in to the strikers. If I can get to work then why shouldn't everyone else?

Tuesday

The papers are full of Mrs Thatcher who it appears has been on American television as well, telling my new friend Mr Clinton to take some action over Bosnia.

Who does she think she is? That is my job except that I do not do it. Luckily Mr Hurd has been on television as well, using a solemn voice and showing that Mrs Thatcher is not the only one who knows about Bosnia. He summed up the situation admirably by saying it was all very complicated and much more complicated than some people with silly handbags and squeaky voices in America would have us believe.

Everyone in the know realised at once who he meant by this and I did too when Mr O'Donnell pointed it out to me.

Later Norma Lamont announced in our Cabinet meeting that the recovery had begun and the recession was over.

Everyone laughed, which shows there is a new mood of optimism abroad. Mr Lamont said that he would produce more facts and figures on Friday. Everyone laughed again.

Wednesday

Mr O'Donnell assures me that the media interest in my predecessor's silly views about Bosnia has died down to a by no means unacceptable level. I am sure he is right although she does seem to be on all the front pages. However as my wife Norman pointed out over the raspberry Pop Tarts there were just as many pictures of myself as her, all with the captions "unsure", "undecided" or "wait and see".

This is a great compliment since anyone can come up with instant solutions. Oh yes. Bosnia is very complicated as both Mr Hurd and now Mr Rifkind agree. Mr Hurd has come up with the phrase "a level playing field" to describe what is happening.

This must be an old Etonian expression to do with the game they play where they all try and kill each other against a wall. Norman and I saw it on a documentary about the class system once.

Later on when I saw Mr Hurd, between television interviews, I asked him what he meant by this very clever phrase. He looked very thoughtful and explained that, as things stood, only one side — the Bosnians — were being slaughtered. "But if we allow them to have guns as well," he went on, "then lots of Serbs will be slaughtered too. It is obviously much better for only one side to be slaughtered rather than two."

I said that it was very sad that a woman of Mrs Thatcher's education could not grasp this simple point.

Thursday

I got up specially early today to see if Mrs Thatcher was still appearing on all the breakfast TV programmes, but I am glad to say that she was only on three times, and then only for about ten minutes a time.

I was very pleased when she was completely and comprehensively destroyed by Mr Rifkind, who spoke extremely well, even though his voice reminds Norman of one of the Daleks on Dr No. His brilliant argument, which is nearly as good as Mr Hurd's, is that allowing the Bosnians to defend themselves would only "prolong the conflict". He is absolutely right. The sooner the Bosnians surrender, the more peaceful it will be. In fact, the more you think about, it is all the fault of the Bosnians that this tragic war is dragging on so long and allowing all those horrible pictures to be shown on television.

I suggested to Mr Hurd that we should actually support the Serbs, as this would be the quickest way to bring the war to an end. Mr Hurd complimented me and said: "That is a very interesting suggestion, Prime Minister, but possibly a little ahead of its time. I should keep it under your hat for the time being."

I thought this was an odd thing to say because I do not normally wear a hat.

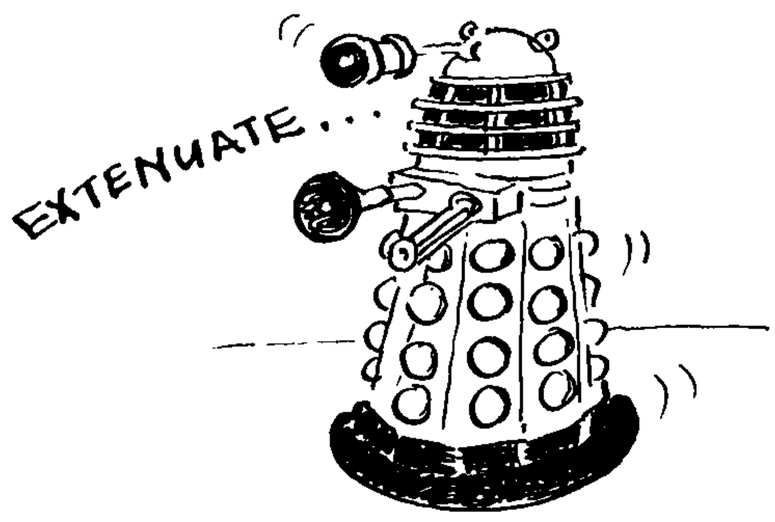
Friday

Today as usual there was the rail strike. But I am glad to say that it has completely failed, as I was at my desk on time, ready for the Cabinet meeting.

Norma Lamont rang up to say that he thought it would not be responsible to add to the traffic chaos, so he proposed to stay at home working on his "boxes". I saw several of these being delivered to his door later by a security firm called Threshers.

Unfortunately everybody else had the same idea, so I was alone for the Cabinet meeting. Only my adviser Miss Hogg had managed to get to work. She brought me the results of a new poll in the Daily Telegraph, which said that only 11% of voters would buy a used car from me.

This is encouraging news as it means that everybody will be buying new cars which is good for the economy. Besides, it would be very foolish for somebody to buy a car of any kind from the Prime Minister. They



would go to a garage or reputable car dealer (see The Used Car Purchaser's Charter, which Mr Waldegrave is working on even as I write!).

Saturday

How dare people say that I am failing to act over Bosnia? Today I telephoned my special friend Mr Clinton to talk about this very issue. We immediately came to a historic agreement. Mr Clinton told me that we would be doing nothing. I gave my full assent, deeming this to be in my judgement the most prudent measure in both the short and long term.

That British Rail InterCity Strike Sizzler Menu in full

No starters
Soup of the Day Off
TUC Biscuits

— ✻ —

Selection of Sandwiches
Thick Scotch Beef
Sardines (fresh from our carriages)
Hard Cheese and Branson Pickle
or
Two Complete Prawns
Served On Bed Of Leaves From Our Track

— ✻ —

From Our Sweet Trolley (cancelled)
Stay At Home Made Pie
with
Private Ice Cream
or
Knapple Crumble

— ✻ —

To drink
Express Coffee (off)

Service on any line is not included

Preview

Virgin Radio
What You Will Hear

9.00 am *Come Fly With Me* **Frank Sinatra**
9.01 am *No, Come Fly With Me, It's Cheaper* **Lord King**

(That's enough Branson. Ed.)

Advertisement

NOMINATED FOR BEST NON-ACTOR 1993

A controversial new movie that tells the legend of the man they call Malcolm R.

Born Malcolm Rifkind in the mean streets of Edinburgh's Morningside, he fought his way up through the tea rooms of Prince's Street to become Defence Secretary. He ended up as the voice and conscience of a black future for everyone *(shurely shome mishtake? Ed)*.

This film asks the important questions about Malcolm:

- **Was he really in favour of non-violence?**
- **Was he really a dalek, as opponents claimed?**
- **Is he really dead?**

One thing is for sure, Malcolm R will change nothing at all if he can help it.

Now showing in a Rather Poor Light

BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ

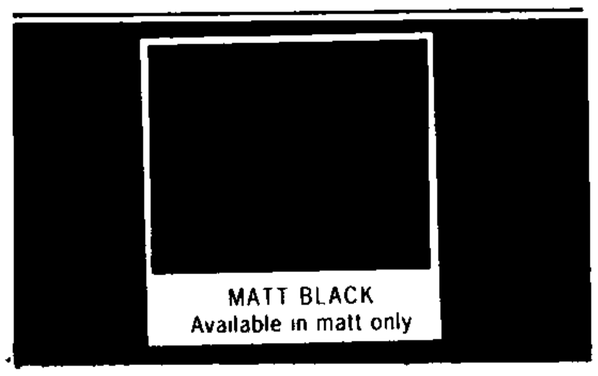
No 17
NEE BASTAAD TELLT ME ABOOT NEE RECESSION! BLUURKS LYIN' ABOOT WI' NOWT TE DEE!
3 MILLION UNEMPLOYED BLA BLA
REDUNDANCIES BLA BLA
FIRMS GO BUST BLA
WHAT'S A RECESSION?
LOVE ON THE DOLE
WE MUST HELP THE UNEMPLOYED TO HELP THEMSELVES!
AYE! LIKE I DO!
HONEY I SHRUNK MYSELF
CIVIL LIST
NOO THEN YA IDLE WORKSHY BASTAADS! GERRUP OFF YER ARSES AN' PULL YER FINGERS OOT!
AN' STOP SPONGIN' OFF US TAXPAYERS!
JOB CENT
I WAS MONTY'S TROUBLE

St Cake's

Forgan Term begins today. There are 862 boys in the school and 83 girls, most of them pregnant owing to the unusual events that took place in a disused hangar one night last July, and which earned the school welcome publicity in the *News of the World* under the headline "YES — IT'S ST CRACK'S". J. Armani-Suit (Birt's) is Chief Tax Dodger and Miss Janet Street-Cred (Porter's) is Senior Yoof. Mr Marmaduke Gusset has been invited by the Governors to stay on as Headmaster for a further term of 15 years. Mr M. Checkland has been asked to retire as the school accountant after the loss of £60 million. Mr A.P. St.J. Botney has become Head of Paxman's. The Perks will be run over Wyatt's Lawn on 15 June. The Founder's Day Sermon, on the theme "That's Life", will be preached in the Chapel by the Deaconess E. Rantzen-Wilcox. The play will be *A Year In Provence*, specially adapted for the school by P.F.B. Mayle (OC). Eldorado's will be on 1 July. The annual OC Dinner and Dance will be held in the BBC Canteen, Wood Lane, on 25 July. Tickets from the bursar Col. S.R.B. Milosevic, The Bunker, Belgrade.

TEST LATE SCORE

Pakistan	4 for no charge
(Wakim Indenickman 32, Wasim Doingwiddegrass 31, Itzal Aframe-up 27, Mustaf Binsomeonelse 29)	
West Indies Police	0

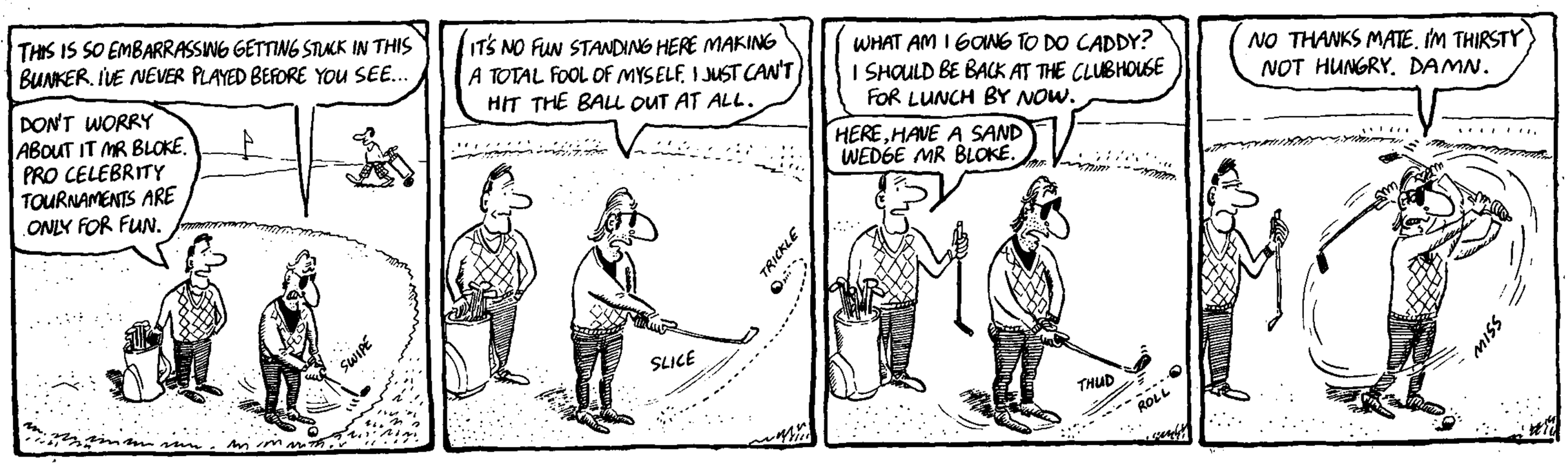


Great Bores Of Today.

"... I haven't had a cold since I can't remember I mean I put it down to a daily intake of vitamin C well over the stated dose anything up to 6,000 mgs you can't OD on it and I always back it with 200 mgs of B_{12} and a multivit any brand's OK although Tesco are cheapest fresh garlic's good but garlic pills are better and they don't smell I mean you can build up immunity I advocate homeopathic remedies like arson alben 6 and nux vomica and ginseng root but you have to be careful there's a lot of fake stuff on the market even so you can't leave out the daily dose of phenylpropanolamine BP and hydrobromide BP I mean all colds are stress-related they must be people worry about getting colds and then they get one Debbie who works with me has had one for six weeks she can't shake it off the main thing is if you take care of yourself you can't catch one... atch-ooo..."

Celeb

LIGGER


THIS IS SO EMBARRASSING GETTING STUCK IN THIS BUNKER. I'VE NEVER PLAYED BEFORE YOU SEE...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT MR BLOKE. PRO CELEBRITY TOURNAMENTS ARE ONLY FOR FUN.
SWIPE
IT'S NO FUN STANDING HERE MAKING A TOTAL FOOL OF MYSELF. I JUST CAN'T HIT THE BALL OUT AT ALL.
SLICE
TRICKLE
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO CADDY? I SHOULD BE BACK AT THE CLUBHOUSE FOR LUNCH BY NOW.
HERE, HAVE A SAND WEDGE MR BLOKE.
THUD
ROLL
NO THANKS MATE. I'M THIRSTY NOT HUNGRY. DAMN.
MISS

Separate Lives

by Silvie Krin

A heartrending new saga from the pen that brought you Love In The Saddle, Born To Be Queen *and* Heir Of Sorrows.

THE Highgrove lawn was bathed in spring sunshine. The flower beds rejoiced in the yellows, blues and pinks of the burgeoning season. In the surrounding woodlands the birds trilled their Easter alleluias — the finches, the grebes and the exotic African onanugu (a wedding gift from the chairman of Threshers) all joined their voices in a jubilant chorus. Life in all its multifarious and glorious variety was reasserting itself, as Sir Laurens van der Post had once put it in a memorable phrase: "April is bustin' out all over." Or was it June? Charles could never be sure.

As he gazed at this wondrous scene through the window of his study, his heart gave a lift. Was it possible that he too after a long winter of strife and sorrow would blossom anew like the buds of the magnesia tree?

"Ready for you now, Sir."

The young BBC producer with a beard and a cardigan interrupted Charles's reverie and beckoned him to where the cameras were waiting.

And there, amongst the expectant crowd of technicians and cameramen, was the svelte figure of Melinda Harpie, his adviser on public relations. It had been her idea to make a film of his children's classic *The Old Loon of Balmoral*.

"It will get you out of yourself," she had told him in that way she had that made him feel at ease with himself. "It will present you in a new light, showing you as sympathetic, caring, humorous, good with children..."

Yes, that was it, and she was right about *The Old Loon*. The filming so far had gone awfully well and everybody at the BBC had laughed at all the jokes — especially when the Old Loon had sat on the toilet.

And now there was just the last sequence to go. Melinda brushed a hair from his McFayed Shetland-style sweater and smiled reassuringly at him.

"You'll be brilliant, Sir. This bit is pure magic."

"Action, Your Royal Highness!" cried the man with the beard. Tristan, was it? Or Justin? Charles had no time to think as the door of the study opened and a group of young children from the Dame Jemima Goldsmith School of Dancing and Drama burst in.

"And you know, children," Charles read from the autocue, "the Old Loon had learnt his lesson."

"Cut, Sire!" came the command. "We'll do the shrinking bit after lunch. Thanks everyone. It's a wrap."

Mingling with the crew and extras at lunch from the Clare Latimer Mobile Canteen parked on the lawn, Charles felt increasingly at home with these merry folk. Diana would never have been any good at such an occasion. She was hopeless at this sort of teamwork, always wanting to be the centre of attraction, unable to mix with such creative persons...

He listened politely as one of the sound recordists, a portly man in a large anorak, described the advantages of the DCC over the traditional analogue recorders.

"It's even better than DAT," enthused the man as he munched on a sweetcorn and smoked turkey sandwich from Miss Latimer's New Statesman range — "For the Busy Executive".

Poor Diana. She had made a great mistake and would end up a rather sad, forgotten figure on the sidelines. *The Old Loon* was clearly going to be a huge hit and Melinda had organised an extraordinarily packed week for him: His talk on Free-Range Eggs. The opening of his exhibition of watercolours of Lake Perricomo at the main Sewell Gallery. Then a meeting of architects to discuss local materials in supermarket design. Another speech on fish... The list was endless. Whereas poor Diana - what was she doing now?

"HELLO. Is that the *Daily Sun*?" Diana placed an elegant chiffon Squijjé handkerchief over the receiver and did her best to disguise her voice.

"I have it, yah, from a really sort of you know personal source that a certain Princess is going to be at Jeremy Thorpe Park over Easter weekend with my two children."

The voice at the other end of the phone replied: "Hold on a minute, madam... Reg! It's the Princess of Wales again. She's setting up a photo op over the weekend. Do you wanna ring the telly or shall I?..."

As she replaced the receiver, Diana's perfectly formed lips broke into a telling smile. She imagined the scene at Windsor Castle when her in-laws opened the newspapers and saw the pictures. The Duke spluttering over his cornflakes, the Queen sour-faced and silent. And the reviews of Charles's television programme — nowhere. She laughed aloud. Now what to wear? She looked great in jeans. James always said so. Casual but elegant. Plenty of leg for the pictures...

ON THE screen the figure of Charles grew smaller and smaller until it was almost a dot. Now that it had been sort of animated and he was able to see the finished version, Charles felt rather ill at ease. The climax of *The Old Loon* made him look rather small, rather insignificant.

"What's the point of this bit, Charles?" said his mother, echoing his thoughts, as the family sat together watching the programme in the 18th century TV lounge.

"I thought you said the idea was to make you look more important, more effective, bigger somehow?"

"Yes," echoed the Duke, brandishing a bundle of tabloids. "Like your bloody ex-wife, who is all over the front pages as per bloody usual."

Charles gazed glumly at the full-page images of Diana and then at the tiny figure on the corner of the screen that had once been himself. It really was...

(To be continued)

'ARM THE MAASTRICHT REBELS'

Maggie's emotional plea

by **Lunchtime O'Bosnia**

IN A fresh outburst last night Lady Thatcher drew the world's attention to the plight of the beleaguered minority on the Conservative backbenches who are fighting a desperate battle for the survival of their country.

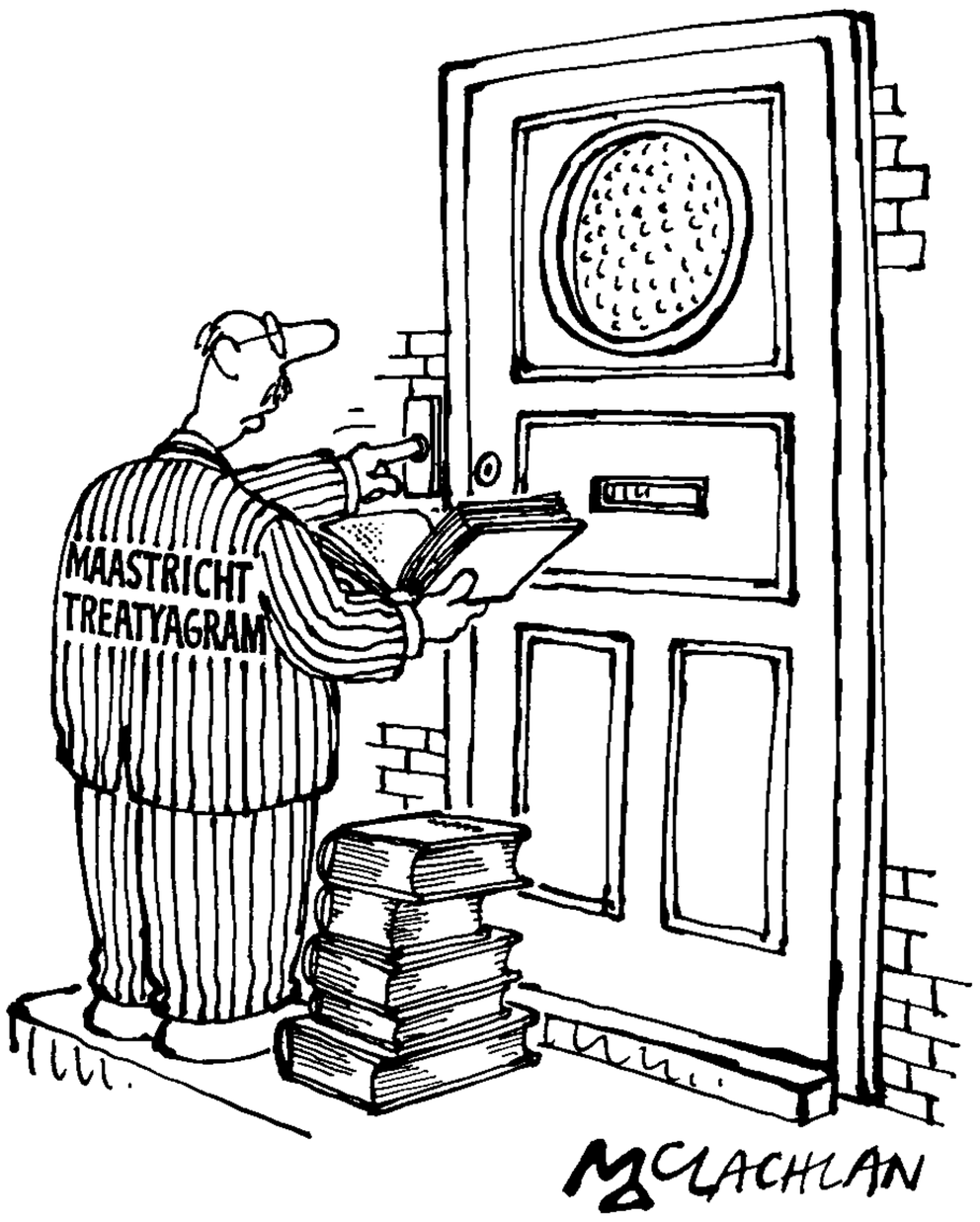
"They face a determined and ruthless enemy who will brook no opposition and who is determined to silence them for good," she told the News at six, seven, eight, nine and ten o'clock.

"They must be given artillery, aircraft and, if necessary, nuclear weapons," she shrieked, her eyes revolving wildly.

"All that is needed for the triumph of evil is for Mr William Cash to be defeated."

ON OTHER PAGES

"Why we need a wartime leader like myself" by Sir Winston Thatcher p. 7



THE SHAME OF JEFFREY ARCHER'S GARDENER

by Our Sex ChangeStaff
Dominica Lawson

THE truth is out at last. After trying to keep it quiet for years, a Cambridgeshire gardener has revealed his terrible private secret.

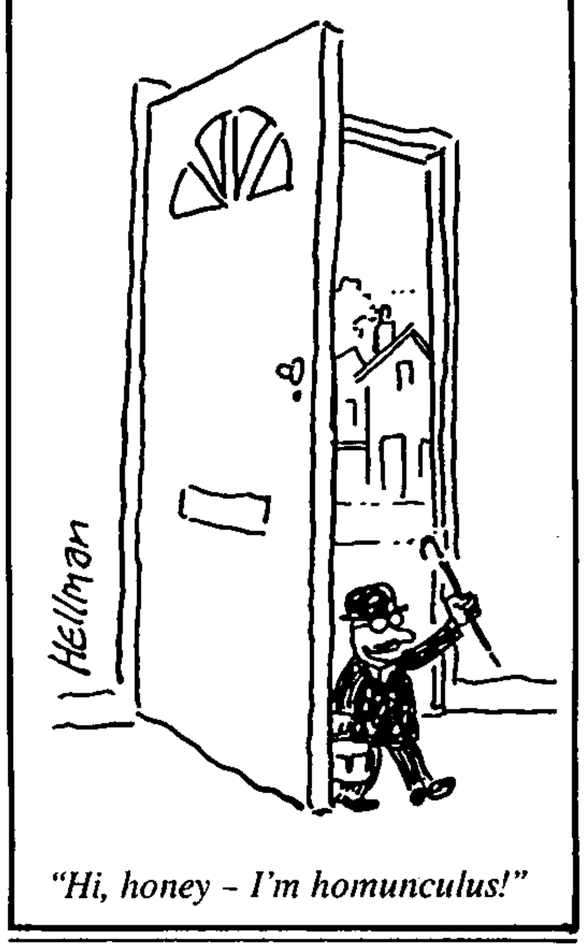
"Yes, I'm working for Jeffrey Archer," he confessed. "I can't deny it any more. Obviously people are going to be upset but I hope that in the end they will understand and be sympathetic."

Yesterday, the man's family were in a state of shock. "We thought he'd just had a sex change," they told reporters. "We had no idea he was employed by the man who wrote *First Among Equals*. It's a hard blow. We'll never live this down."

A leading psychologist however gave a more reasoned view of the man's condition.

"A lot of people suddenly feel the need to take money from Lord Archer. Publishers, agents, men at Victoria Station... There's nothing odd or unnatural about it. Let's face it, wanting to work for the former deputy chairman of the Tory Party is no worse than... well, OK, now I come to think of it, it's quite serious really and may need urgent treatment."

Lady Archer is fragrant.



"Hi, honey - I'm homunculus!"

THE PRISONER

The cult TV show brought to you by Group 4 Security

(Silly 'sixties music)

NUMBER ONE: Bring in the Prisoner! Bring in Number Six!

NUMBER TWO: I'm afraid he has escaped, sir.

NUMBER ONE: But Number Four was meant to be guarding him!

NUMBER TWO: Yes, but he lost him.

NUMBER ONE: Why?

NUMBER TWO: Er... I'm sorry... The reason escapes me

(Silly closeup on Number One's face)

NUMBER ONE: Right, Number Two. I'm holding you responsible... Number Two? Number Two? Where have you gone?

(Cut to Number Six strolling happily outside high wall)

NUMBER SIX: I am not a number. I'm a Free Man!

NUMBERS SEVEN TO 394: Join the club!

(More silly music. Ends.)

© Channel Group Four

Introducing our new £50,000-a-minute star columnist

ANNE DIABOLICAL

Why you should watch me on TV

Me on TV

I WAS walking down the street the other day when hundreds of people came up and asked me for my autograph. It's really great being on telly!

Mum's the word

I am a mother and yet I appear on TV in the mornings. Is it possible for a woman to combine both roles? And, what's more, to write a column in the *Daily Mirror*?

Well, all I can say is — *I* do it. But then I am brilliant!

Anne other one

I WAS walking down the street on the way to the supermarket (having returned from the TV studio) when an old man said to me: "Aren't you Anne Robinson?"

Anne Robinson, with all due respect, can't write a column and looks terrible on television. How could anyone possibly confuse us?

Aren't some people stupid?

NEXT WEEK: More of the same.

ON THE AIR

The Today Programme
Radio Four

SUE McGREGOR *(for it is she):* ...thank you very much, Chief Rabbi — and now Bosnia. On the line from Tuzla we have a Canadian aid worker who is going to give us an extremely horrific and disturbing eye-witness account of what really happened in last week's massacre. I must warn listeners in advance that the questions I am about to ask are so shocking that many people will be utterly revolted.

CANADIAN VOICE: Hullo.

McGREGOR: Could you describe for us in detail exactly what you saw last week when all the women and children were killed? I mean, was there a great deal of blood? Did you see children actually dying in front of your eyes? I'm afraid we haven't got a great deal of time, so could you describe for our listeners the very worst and most heartrending things you saw — we only have five seconds, I'm afraid, so could you pick out the most gruesome and sickening incident of all?

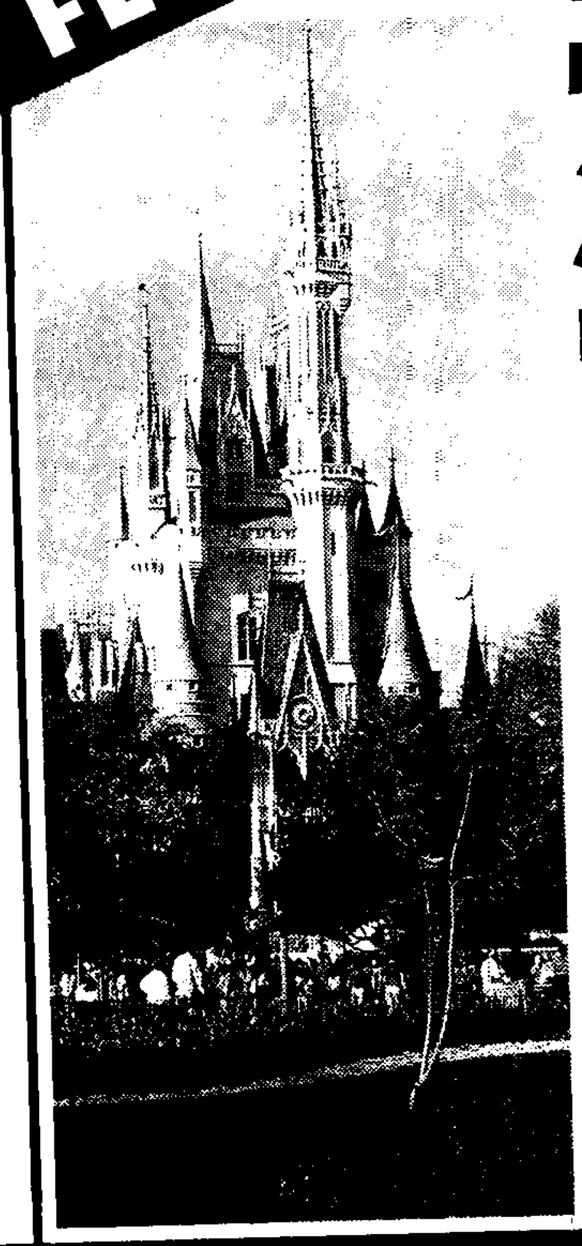
VOICE: Er...

McGREGOR: ...well, thank you, for that really horrendous picture of what it is like to see people being blown up. And now, Paul McCartney at 51. Do you remember this tune...

(Sound of old Beatles record)

Advertisement

WELCOME TO FLORIDA



HOME OF DISMALLAND AND THE MUGGERS' KINGDOM

It's the holiday experience of a lifetime.
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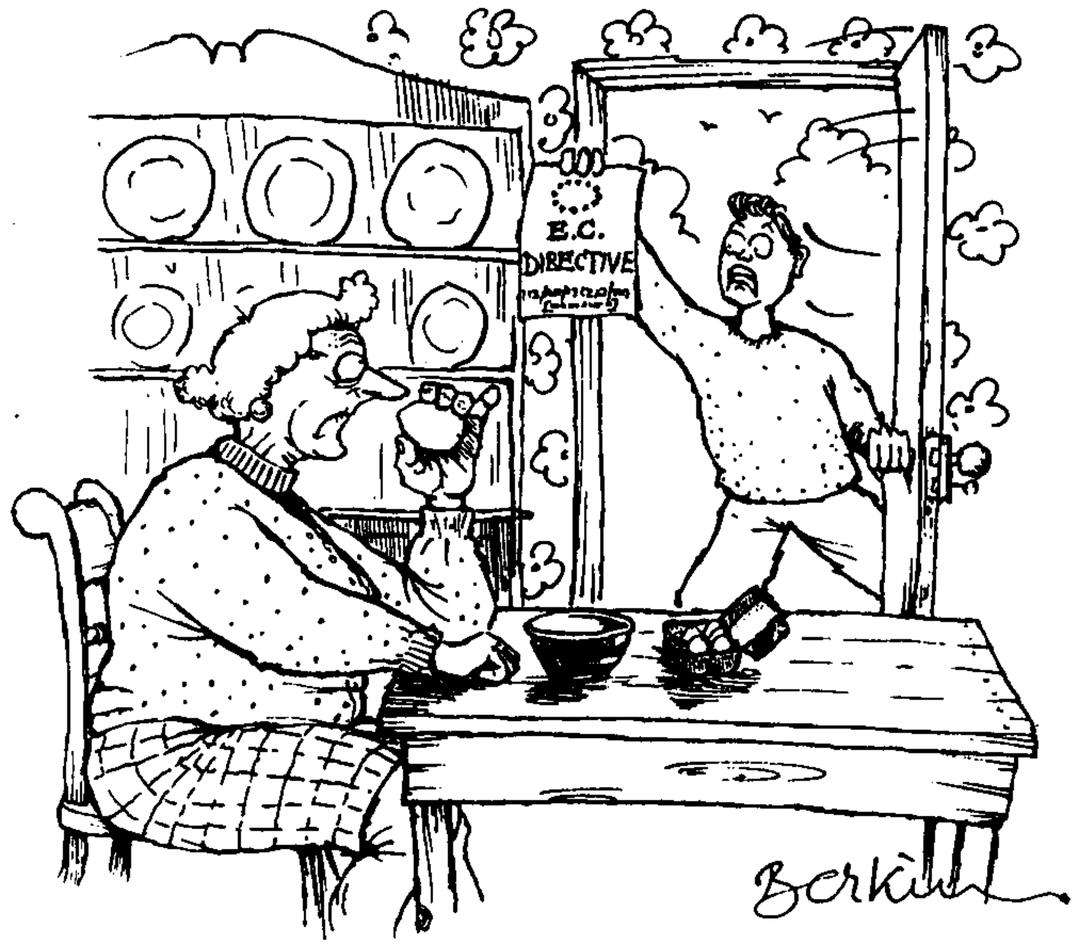
- The chance to meet those larger-than-life characters Dopey, Druggy, Smacky, Cracky, Crazy and Loony!

AND IT ONLY COSTS YOU ALL YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE!



"Granny! **Stop!** *You've got to go on a Brussels-approved egg-sucking course"*

NEW TEST FOR 14-YEAR-OLDS

by Our Education Staff **N.U.T. Case**

A NEW test has been introduced for all 14-year-olds to "assess their general performance and competence across a wide range of disciplines".

In a trial run carried out on one particular 14-year-old, however, the results were startling.

The teenager in question, H.M. Government, was found to have "learned absolutely nothing" in the past 14 years.

The examinee received the following report:

Mathematics: 0 per cent. Can't even count.

Geography: 0 per cent. Thought "Bosnia" was a type of lager.

Reading: 0 per cent. Had not read Maastricht Treaty before signing it.

Domestic Science: 0 per cent. Did not know the cook.

History: 0 per cent. Blamed Labour Party for everything.

Creative Writing: 0 per cent. Has written a number of Charters and a few budgets, all showing no promise.

Comments: Could not do worse.

Having studied the report, Mr John Patten said that this type of testing was "totally unacceptable". He called for "continuous assessment," or better still "no assessment at all" as the fairest means of enabling the Government to stay in power.

Notes & Queries

A service by our readers for our readers (as seen in all other newspapers)

QUESTION: Why do giraffes have long necks?

☐ ORIGINALLY the giraffe, or Giraffus giraffus africanus, looked more like a small sheep but during the Jurassic Period (9-8 million years BC) it evolved into the long-necked creature we know today. — *D. Attenborough, c/o BBC.*

QUESTION: Who wore the first bowtie?

☐ THE first recorded wearer of a bowtie was Sir Farquharson "Beau" Tighe (1787-1861), who was seen at the Brighton Pavilion in May 1808 in what was described in the *Spectator* as "a perfectly ghastly pink cravat incorrectly knotted in the middle". Despite the *Spectator*'s strictures, Sir Farquharson's innovation quickly set a fashion which has survived to this day. — *P.B. Smithiers, Rutland Cravat Co.*

QUESTION: Is it true that Hitler liked sausages?

☐ THERE is no written evidence that Hitler ever ate a sausage, although sausages have long been popular in Bavaria, the part of Germany in which Hitler lived from 1921 to 1924. — *D. Irving, author of 'Hats Off To Hitler' (Sinclair-Stevenson).*

QUESTION:How can you weigh your own nose?

☐ CONTRARY to B.L. Chevenix-Trench's strange assertion last week that the weight of a nose can be calculated according to the formula

$$\frac{a-b}{L}(c) = x$$

where a = the overall weight of the body, b = the volume of water displaced by nose in bath, c = the volumetric weight of the bathwater and L = the VAT registration number, might I offer a simpler solution? *(No. Ed.)*

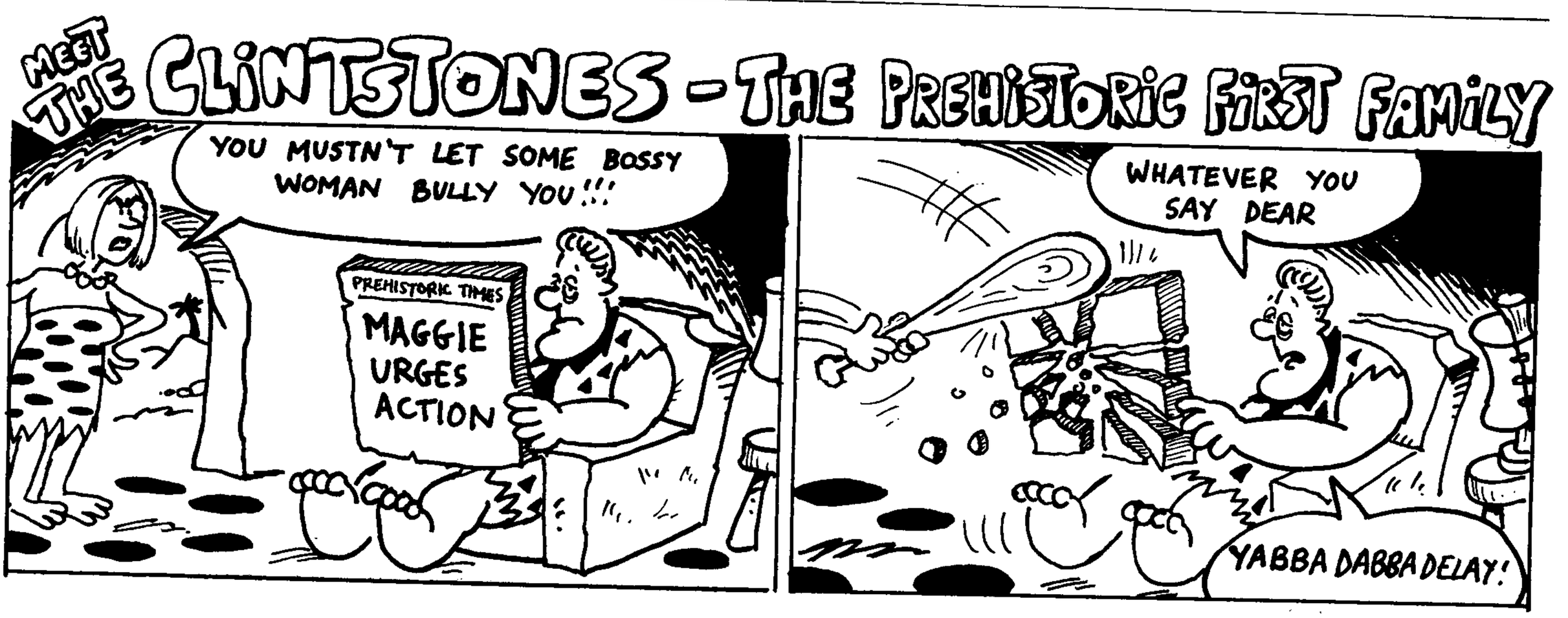
QUESTION: Why do we sleep lying down?

☐ A RECENT study published by the Institute de Sommeil in Limoges showed that the prone position for sleep is by no means universal. The Waki-Waki islanders in Melanesia sleep standing on their heads with no ill-effects. — *Baroness Blackstone, Birkbeck College.*

NEXT WEEK: Answers please to the following: What does the "A.N." stand for in A.N. Wilson? Do bats dream? Where does the saying "fit as a fiddle" come from? Why do people buy the *Sunday Times*?

Foot tasting, arranged through the courtesy of Marks & Spencers and Safeway, gives customers a rare chance to try some of those more exotic flavours.

Nags Head Shopping Centre advertisement


MEET THE CLINTSTONES - THE PREHISTORIC FIRST FAMILY
YOU MUSTN'T LET SOME BOSSY WOMAN BULLY YOU!!!
PREHISTORIC TIMES
MAGGIE URGES ACTION
WHATEVER YOU SAY DEAR
YABBA DABBA DELAY!

IL INDEPENDENTE

Edittore: Sgr Andreotti Whittamstrobini

FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1993

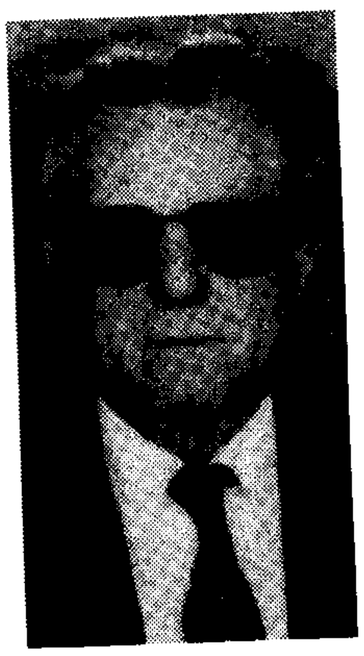
2bn lira

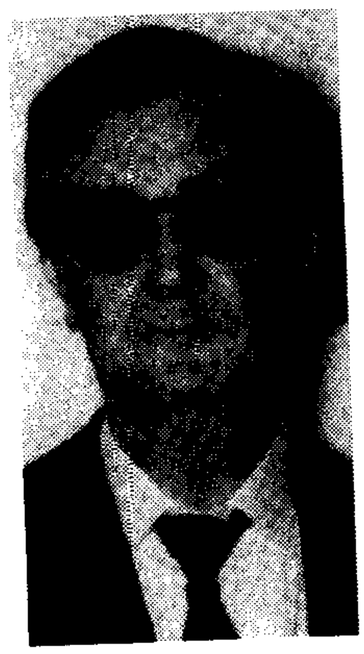
Scandal taints entire Government Can Majore Survive?

by Our Man in London ALESSANDRO CHANCELLORE

HAVING been in power as long as anyone can remember, the Non-Christian Non-Democrat Party (known as I Tories) was last night facing complete collapse as yet more names of top ministers were added to the ever-lengthening roll call of shame.

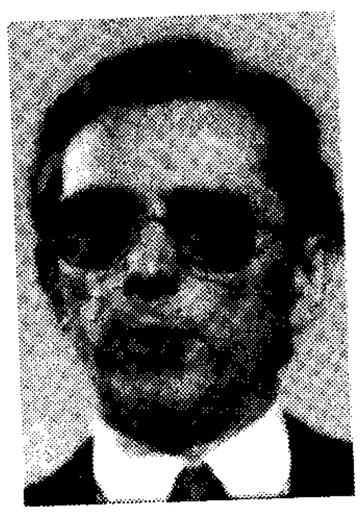
The embattled party leader Giovanni Majore, once widely respected by several of his Cabinet colleagues, now seems totally discredited, as he presides over what has been described as "the most incompetent and corrupt bunch of self-serving nonentities in history".





One by one they stand accused

Normanno Lamonte, 51. Accused of squandering billions of pounds of taxpayers' money in mad foreign exchange gambles. Also central figure in both the Onanugu and Miss Whiplash affairs. Used public money to hire notorious lawyer Pietro della Cartero Fucchini to threaten journalists.



Normanno di Fowleri, 54. Chairman of Non-Christian Non-Democratic Party. Now heavily implicated in the privatisation of prisons scandal (or "Opengate"). Openly admitted that he was "spending time with The Family".

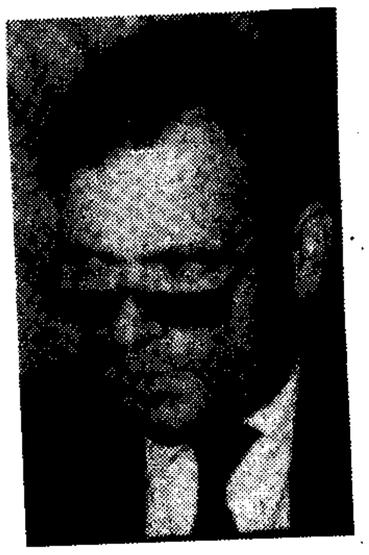
Davide Mellore, 43. Forced to resign last year after he had been linked with Porn Queen Antonia di Pizza. Accepted swanky foreign holidays from wealthy Arab businessman.

Michelangelo Heseltini, 60. Millionaire businessman caught out trying to "do a Maxwell" on Coal Board pension fund.

Vasco da Gumma, 52. Accepted free "pond" from agri-businessmen who hoped to benefit from EC regulations.

La Signorina Thatcherina, 84. Known as "The Grandmother". For years she was the undisputed boss (or "Capo di Cino") of a gang of shady operators, ranging from the notorious Lord King to the absurd Lord Young. Her son Marco made millions out of alleged "deals" with Middle Eastern potentates.

Tristan Garel-Jones, 41. Kenneth Clarke, 44. Malcolm Rifkind, 46. The so-called "Matrix Churchill Three", who attempted to imprison innocent businessmen to cover up their own arms-dealing with Saddam Hussein.



Il Conte di Asshole, 52. Close intimate of both "The Grandmother" and Majore, Asshole throws lavish parties in his penthouse, serving "shepherd's pizzas" to the rich and powerful. Uses fiction-writing as a front to conceal the fact that he is one of the country's biggest twits *(surely 'most influential men'? Ed.)*

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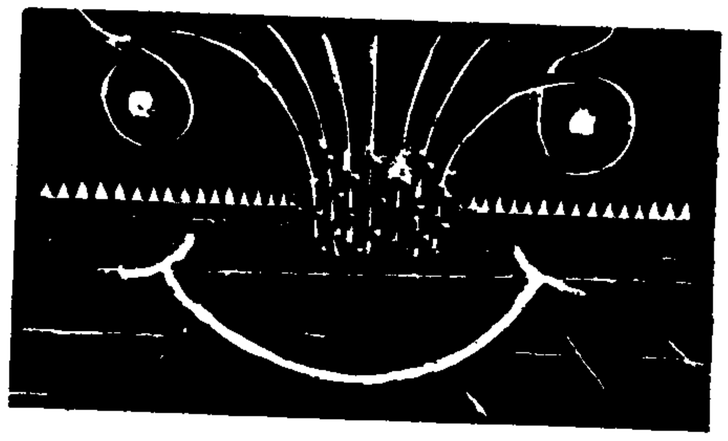
DIARY



SIR ROBIN DAY

It is not for the humble television legend — the veteran interviewer, for over thirty five years, of over eight Prime Ministers and countless dozens of Cabinet Ministers — to pull rank on those who seek to follow him. That is something I would never do.

The younger generation of television interviewers — I won't name them for, quite frankly, I can't remember what they're called — need no advice from me, even though my services to our democratic process have been acknowledged, time and time again, by countless awards and chancellorships, by long-standing friendships with many of the leading figures of state and, of course, by my well-deserved knighthood in 1981.

But a kindly word, if I may, in the ears of those young whippersnappers who wish to follow in my footsteps. There are interviewers around today who seem to think it awfully clever to be snide, supercilious or downright offensive. It is almost as if they do not feel themselves privileged to be in the company — if only for a few minutes — of some of the greatest politicians of our day. This was never my way. Far from it. When interviewing figures of immense stature on the world stage such as Ted Heath or Jim Callaghan, I could be firm, yes, tough, yes, but never discourteous. Needless to say, some have seen fit to criticise me for simply indulging in "Establishment swordplay" or to accuse me of "sucking up" to my interviewees in private. But nothing could be further from the truth, as Ted, Jim and countless other great statesmen are at pains to assure me every time we enjoy a drink and a laugh together.

In 1957, I drew up a six-point code for the ideal television interviewer which I submitted as statutory five-point guidelines to the Director General of the day, whose name now, sadly, escapes me. I still stand by them.

1) The television interviewer must do his duty as a journalist, meeting with his interviewees at private functions and party conferences to exchange compliments on a one-to-one basis.

2) He should wear a bow-tie at all times to distinguish himself from the riff-raff.

3) However distinguished he may be, he should never allow any Prime Minister or World Leader to be unduly awed in his presence.

4) He should always be prepared to make himself available for chat-shows, quiz-games, mid-morning magazine programmes and song-and-dance routines whilst affecting always to despise them.

5) He should remember that a television interviewer is not employed as a debater, prosecutor, inquisitor, psychiatrist or third-degree expert, but as a highly-skilled journalist seeking to impress the full majesty of his intellect on the viewer at home.

6) When offered cigars, meals and after-dinner drinks by leading politicians, he should accept them with good grace, perhaps offering a little tender banter in return.

Incidentally, my younger colleagues can judge for themselves whether their own performances match up to the high standards of this code. I pass on this suggestion without comment, finding it more judicious and dignified to leave it to the persons in question to judge their own pitiful worth.

Many of my television interviews have, I humbly submit, gone down in history as prime examples of the productive cut-and-thrust between world statesmen and highly professional television interviewer. For instance, this exchange with Edward Heath in 1972 has entered the annals as a prime example of the interviewer's art, and I make no apology for reprinting it here:

RD: Mr Heath, thank you for inviting me here today.

HEATH: I am grateful to you, Robin, for giving me the opportunity to explain our policies to your viewers.

RD: Thank you, Prime Minister.

HEATH: I think it's for me to thank you, Robin.

RD: And why should that be?

HEATH: Why should what be?

RD: Why should it be that it's for you to thank me, Prime Minister?

HEATH: Because, as I have just said, I am grateful to you, Robin, for giving me the opportunity to explain our policies to your viewers.

RD: A lot of people may be surprised at that remark, Prime Minister —

HEATH: They may indeed, Robin! *(laughs)*

RD: But even your opponents would not argue with the proposition that you are no stranger to surprises! Once again, Prime Minister, you have surprised us all.

HEATH: Thank you, Robin.

RD: No — thank *you*, Prime Minister.

HEATH: Now, if I could just say one or two words on our statutory incomes policy...

RD: I'm sorry, Mr Heath, but that's all we have time for. Thank you very much.

HEATH: Thank you, Robin.

(MUSIC AND TITLES CLOSE)

HEATH: Well, you gave me a pretty rough ride there, Robin!

RD: Not too rough, I trust, Ted!

HEATH: Will you stay for a quick drink?

RD: Delighted to, Ted. I must say, I thought we both came over very well, and that's the main thing.

HEATH: Yes, that's the main thing. Sherry, Robin — or something a little stronger?

Why are the young sprigs so rude? The other day, I went along to *Good Morning with Anne and Nick*, a television entertainment of which I had never previously heard, to promote my new book. I was my usual genial self, and they loved me for it.

"So what's the book about, Sir Robin?" says the young man.

"You should have done your homework, boy!" I retort.

"It's your interviews, is it?" says the young woman.

"I'm not hanging around here to be asked impertinent questions like that, young lady."

"I think it's fair to say you're a legend in your own lifetime, Sir Robin," adds the young man.

"How dare you! How downright offensive! What is this show, anyway, and which one are you? Are you the man or the woman?"

Needless to say, everyone seems delighted by my untiring wit and bonhomie. If only there were more proper gentlemen like me around, one might not fear for the future of British broadcasting. As it is, rampant egotism and rudeness reign.

John Burt, 52, of Havre Towers, Weston, Southampton. Made a false representation to obtain benefit. One-year conditional discharge. Costs: £25.

Southern Evening Echo

STAR BARGAINS
inside this week

Hoover Turbo Vacuum Claener
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Literary Review

"Roger's found the bones of an infinite number of monkeys!"

The first cuckold of spring

The Man Who Made Husbands Jealous
Jilly Cooper
(Bantam, £15.99)

HERE'S a neat trick. People buy Jilly Cooper books to read on the beach to stop their brains disturbing their rest. They make good escapist reading because, on the one hand, they are marginally more interesting to look at than a faceful of *sand* but, on the other, they are less mentally demanding than a packet of crisps.

This makes them the idjit's choice — just perfect for the one book a year readers, the half a book a year readers, the couldn't-get-on-with-it-at-alls. But this summer Cooper's troopers are in for a little surprise. Although superficially appearing an acceptably escapist confection, *The Man Who Made Husbands Jealous* is one of the most depressing novels ever published. Despite being set in "the idyllic Rutshire village of Paradise", it's actually, quite unmistakeably, an Inferno.

It's not just the appalling prose, the caricature characterisation, the absence of a plot or the shameless resort to padding that make the book hell to read. Her fans have never minded these before — although they are possibly just a little worse this time around.

Silly Jilly's style depends on a few tawdry verbal counters: "utterly", "seriously", "marvellous", "mega", "blissful", "heavenly", "ravishing" and the like. She is unable to construct a plot, but that doesn't matter because her readers are unable to hold one in their minds. So her people just dawdle around for 500 pages behaving in character, until she makes the right man get the right girl. The gaps are filled up with horribly protracted set pieces, mostly sporting — here we get a polo match, a cricket match, a concert, a village fete, a nativity play, a skiing trip, a horse race, a tennis tournament and a dismal sort of orgy.

The miserable personnel are differentiated by such subtle devices as making one main woman character speak refained ("Ay don't think that's in the raight spirit") and another Cockney ("Fank you for everyfink"). But if these prove too complex, a cast list is provided at the beginning, which tells you all you need to know ("Seb and Dommie Carlisle. The heavenly twins. Vastly brave professional polo players, whose serious wildness has been tempered by the recession.")

Every 20 pages or so, the desert wastes are embellished with an awkward attempt at a witticism — "coq-up au vin", "she doesn't kick against the lack of pricks", "Think not for whom the telephone bell tolls", and so forth. Rather funnier than these are Cooper's inadvertent misadventures with the English language and the human body. "Georgie's heart seemed to be beating between her legs," for example, and "Her splendid bosom soared above an enviously thin waist..." — which would be quite good had they been deliberate.

All this is bestseller standard issue. What's not is the extraordinarily brutish, dispiriting portrayal of marital infidelity. The mistress of Jilly Cooper's husband Leo took the unusual step a few years ago of publishing her story in the *Grauniad*. This book is evidently a long-term product of that kerfuffle.

It begins in a wish-fulfilment fantasy. Lysander Hawkley is 22, "broad-shouldered, heart-stoppingly handsome, wildly affectionate, with a wall-to-wall smile that withered women," as Cooper haplessly puts it. This paragon moves into a posh Cotswold village called "Paradise" to help the neglected and betrayed wives of the area, one after the other, to regain their husbands' affections by making them jealous.

He duly sleeps with them all. But then, as the book plods on, round and round the circles of hell, every single person in the village sleeps with everybody else. Halfway through the story, at the nativity play, it is suggested that instead of singing "Oh come all ye faithful...", the lyrics should say "Oh come both ye faithful" because there are only two such people in the village. By the end, it's been revealed that neither of these are faithful either.

As usual, Cooper does her best to make the sex appealing by making a menagerie of it. "Plunging his face into her pubic hair, snuffling as appreciatively as a truffle pig..."; "as joyously as an otter diving into a summer stream he plunged his cock inside her"; "despite her wriggling away like a piglet, he kissed her"; "her dark hair tickling his belly, she kissed him everywhere, her tongue as delicate and subtle as a lurcher's"; "she's so peaceful, thought Lysander protectively, like a leveret, or a female mallard", etc.

But, pigs and dogs apart, the dominant mood of the book is one of excruciating jealousy and betrayal, real cruelty and pain. The men are all false, but then so are all the women. Cooper's views break out in grim little editorials.

"The only pleasure afforded a chronically cuckolded wife, of witnessing the anguish of one's husband's current mistress when he moves on to a new one, was denied to poor Kitty..."

"If you have a remotely attractive husband in the nineties... you have to be prepared to share him," advises one wife. "The most important thing in marriage is companionship and a huge bit on the side to cheer one through the bad patches," counsels another.

No sweet dreams in the sun-lounger then; nightmares, rather. Since this message of misery is automatically going to become the hardback bestseller of the summer and the paperback of next, it's quite a good con to have perpetrated. But hell hath no fury... Nice to see Andrew Parker-Bowles in her acknowledgements, too.

Books & Bookmen

■ **THIS WEEK should bring radical changes at Random House in preparation for the arrival of Queen Caroline Michel as marketing supremo and associate publisher, whatever that means, of a clutch of imprints in Vauxhall Bridge Road.**

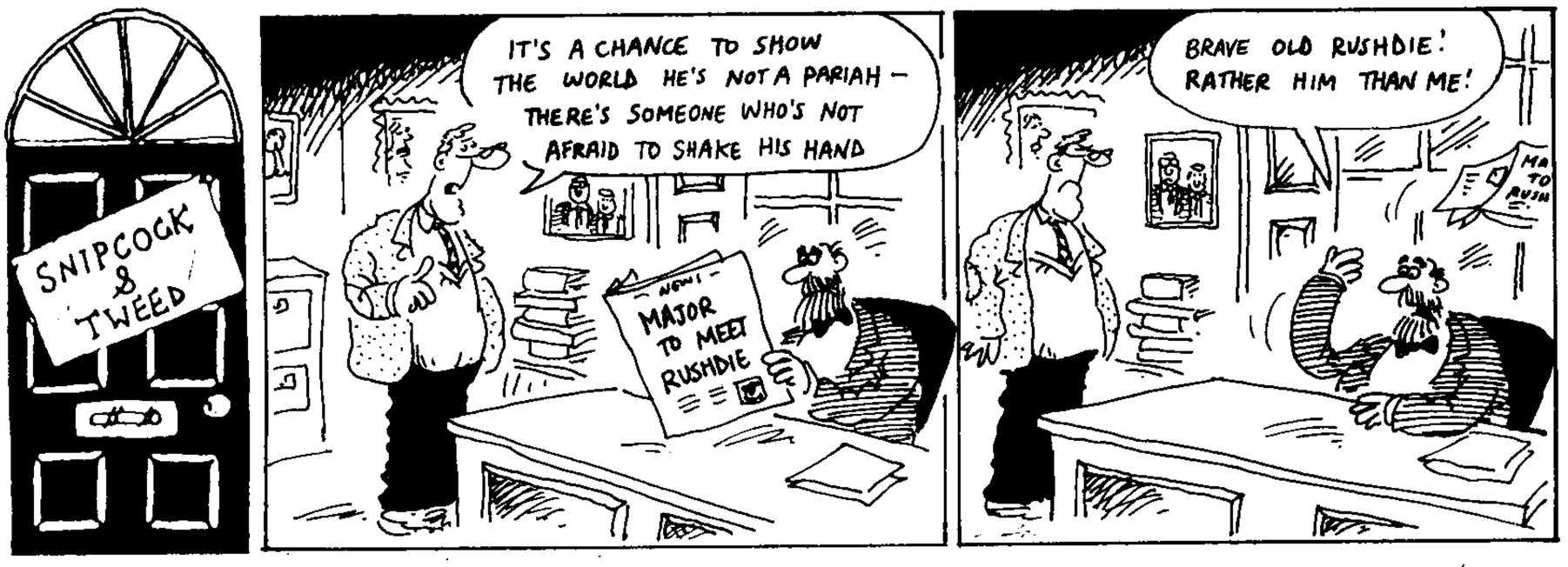
Rumours down the years of the departure from Chatto & Windus of sprightly virago Carmen Callil have been greatly exaggerated. Carmen is rejoicing in having newly received a further five-year contract, but to do precisely what has not yet been disclosed to most of her colleagues.

Speculation is rife that the group's chief executive, Gail Rebuck, will announce to the troops this week that Frances Coady, currently in charge of the successful Vintage paperback list, will in addition assume a major role at Chatto as well; and that the lean and hungry Neil Belton, editor of the year for his work on *An Evil Cradling*, will have much to do with Vintage as well as rising in the hierarchy at Jonathan Cape.

Maybe la Callil is to be given overall charge of Cape as well, which *would* make life difficult for the excitable Boy David.

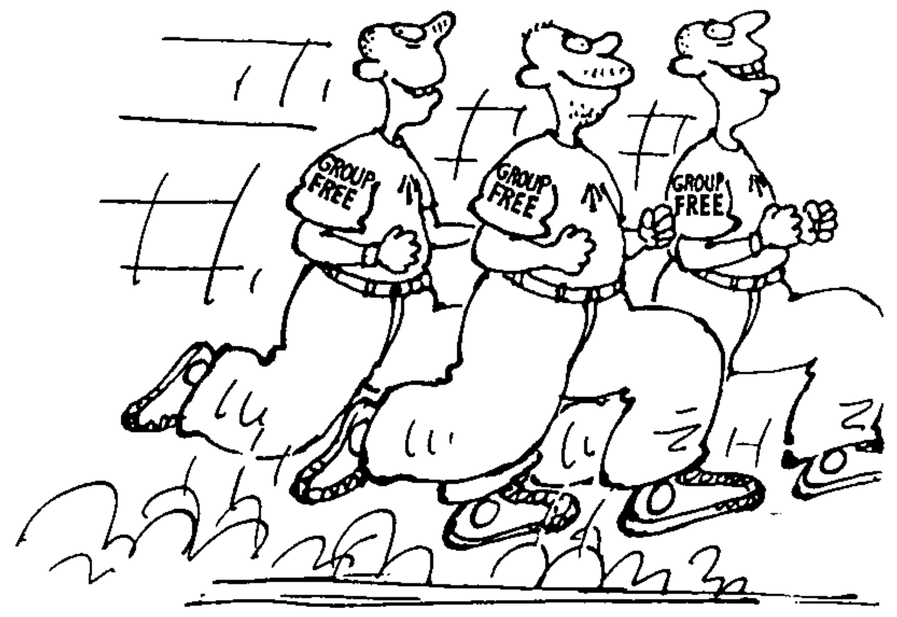
□ MANAGING DIRECTOR Felicity Rubinstein (13¾) was recently eased out of Macmillan London. Now they have announced a new publishing director who will have "overall responsibility for the Macmillan London List". The job goes to Roland "Roly" Phillips, who is Felicity's husband. So that's OK.

'Bookworm'


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
IT'S A CHANCE TO SHOW THE WORLD HE'S NOT A PARIAH — THERE'S SOMEONE WHO'S NOT AFRAID TO SHAKE HIS HAND
— NOW! — MAJOR TO MEET RUSHDIE
BRAVE OLD RUSHDIE! RATHER HIM THAN ME!
MAJOR TO RUSH

PRISONS

Privatised porridge



GROUP 4 (director: Sir Norman Fowler) may know how to deliver parcels, but it is having less luck with real humans.

Operating a home office contract to escort prisoners between courts and prisons, its dim-witted employees were astonished this month when the prisoners decided to hoof it. You don't get parcels doing that.

The fiasco was put down to "teething troubles", but comes amid growing reports that Group 4's luxury prison, the Wolds in Humberside, is awash with hard drugs and violence, and that thuggish inmates more or less have the run of the place.

Next month Britain's second private prison opens — Blakenhurst, in Hereford and Worcester — and one of the key directors of the consortium running it has been having teething troubles of his own for more than two decades.

The man is Don Terrell Hutto, senior executive and director of the Corrections Corporation of America, the only partner in the Blakenhurst consortium with any experience of running prisons. Hutto, who is responsible for setting up the Blakenhurst outfit over here, has a past that repays inspection.

In the 1970s he was commissioner of correction in Arkansas and responsible for a notorious maximum security prison called Cummings. In a series of legal cases brought against him by inmates over a period of several years, Hutto was repeatedly found by the US courts to be inflicting "cruel and unusual punishment" on prisoners.

Inmates at Cummings who breached the rules were sentenced to "punitive isolation" — the slightly odd title given to a regime in which prisoners were crammed into a tiny cell with two or three other inmates, for indeterminate lengths of time but sometimes months at a stretch. The cells had only two beds for four men. Inmates were fed on "grue" — a "tasteless and unappetizing substance", as the law reports describe it — so disgusting that many prisoners refused to eat and became malnourished.

After each fortnight in these cells, inmates were weighed to see how much weight they had lost. Not surprisingly, prisoners kept in these conditions were "filled with frustration and hostility", some were "extremely dangerous" and others were "psychopaths". As a result, serious violence often erupted between prisoners and guards. Guards responded by gassing prisoners with Mace and beating them with night sticks. The courts found their response was "at times excessive".

The courts also found that Hutto's prison regime was in breach of the US constitution. Even so, he flouted court orders to clean up his act and it took four years, and the intervention of the US supreme court, to force Arkansas to carry out court instructions.

Not that Hutto's career suffered: he went on to become vice- president of the American Correctional Association, before going into the private prison business with CCA (part of the same empire as Kentucky Fried Chicken). Perhaps fed up with being taken to court by prisoners, CCA in 1986 dissolved itself as a Tennessee corporation and relocated to Delaware, in order, as the company put it, to take advantage of "a recent amendment to general corporation law... designed to limit the personal liability of directors".

Wisely, as it turned out, CCA's American jails have experienced a series of disasters and cock-ups. For example, in 1990 state auditors in Texas found that two new CCA prisons were breaching the terms of their contracts. The audit — unusually, made public — found serious breaches of contract by CCA:

- Guards using excessive force on inmates. Instead of taking disciplinary action, CCA simply chalked up the incidents to "guard inexperience".
- Profiteering, by overcrowding the prison, and deliberately not filling staff vacancies.
- Not providing proper health and dental care: inmates had to wait six weeks to see a dentist.
- Trying to obstruct state auditors who were trying to gather information. Charles Terrell, prison board chairman, told the local Fort Worth press he was "frustrated and angry" at CCA, which had won the contract three years previously, after assuring the state that it had the experience and personnel to make a success of the job. CCA said that the problems were "typical in start up phases".

Here in Britain, Hutto has made similar promises, convincing the government that his consortium can offer "a higher standard of care", "a purposeful and secure regime", "better value for money, and a better deal for prisoners".

Still, his partners, Mowlem and Robert McAlpine, are both pouring money into Tory party coffers, and CCA has its own impeccable right-wing credentials: its founder was chairman of the Tennessee Republican Party, with a reputation for pork-barrelling. Perhaps nobody in the home office cared to look closely enough at what kind of service they were likely to get.

WEST MIDLANDS

Turn again Whittington

A SERIES of writs and parliamentary motions is about to shed light on Birmingham city coroner Richard Whittington.

Whittington has already endeared himself to the warders who rule the city's Winson Green prison with a series of innocuous verdicts over mentally ill prisoners who killed themselves while unsupervised in custody. Now it is the police's turn: this time in the notorious case of PC Tony Salt, who died outside an illegal drinking den in Bordesley Green in April 1989.

Whittington, who holds hundreds of inquests a year into the innocent deaths of old ladies who fall over, road accident victims and suicides, has blocked any further inquiry into the death of a policeman on duty — a death whose cause still remains a mystery.

Salt, an alleged alcoholic and drug addict, was supposed to be monitoring the drinking den with his colleague, PC Mark Berry. Instead they sneaked off to a lock-in at a nearby pub where each drank nearly 10 pints of beer. Salt was later found dead from head injuries — and Berry made a series of false statements saying that Salt had been attacked by a group of West Indians.

Three West Indians — Peter Gibbs, Mark Samuels and Tony Francis — were arrested. After some "gentle" persuasion for which the West Midlands force is so famous, all three made confessions and were charged with murder. Whittington, meanwhile, had opened and adjourned an inquest, to be concluded after the three men's trials.

Then things began to go wrong for the police. A taxi-driver came forward to say he had driven Gibbs and Samuels away from the club before Salt died. Salt's wallet, which Gibbs and Samuels had "confessed" to stealing, was found in the pub, and a martial arts weapon they had also "confessed" to taking was found at Salt's home — by his wife.

Charges against Gibbs and Samuels were dropped, but those against Tony Francis proceeded and reached Birmingham crown court, where defence lawyers spotted that Mrs Salt's statement — and 28 others crucial to the defence — had been left out of the bundles passed to them by police. When they emerged the charges were instantly dropped, too. That was in 1990.

The obvious next move was for Whittington to reopen his inquest and ascertain how Salt died. The answer, according to pathologists who examined the body, is probably that he staggered drunkenly into the shovel of a road digger and that Berry was too scared to admit they had been drinking. A simple enough inquiry one would think — but Whittington has persistently refused to carry it out. Why?

Part of the answer for the unwillingness of the police to press the coroner to complete the inquest may lie in claims of Salt's alcoholism and drug abuse. If, as is alleged, he called at the club he was supposed to be watching to try to buy drugs and had been turned away by the doormen because he was so drunk, then this would not exactly be good PR for the West Midlands squad. All this remains unsolved. But only for the time being. Francis has just issued a writ against West Midlands police and Steven Jonas, the solicitor acting for Gibbs and Samuels, is about to issue two more, all alleging false arrest and malicious prosecution, among other charges.

The witnesses likely to be subpoenaed include assistant chief constable Tom Meffen, who led the inquiry, and the detectives working for him — including several past members of the infamous serious crimes squad. But one of the prize witnesses who could be forced to appear is coroner Whittington himself, whose reasons for abandoning the inquest are considered crucial in the absence of a formal verdict on how Salt died.

Meanwhile Labour MP Chris Mullin is marking the fourth anniversary of Salt's death this month with a parliamentary motion demanding that his inquest be completed. Truth, it seems, has become almost as battered a victim as the men framed by the West Midlands police.

WATER

Dirty business

THE BATTLE of the pamphlets in the water industry has been taken up in bellicose style by the national rivers authority (NRA), which rejects the claim by Ofwat, the water regulator, that it is unnecessary laws that are driving up the cost of water.

This was the assertion made by Ian Byatt, director general of water services (see the last *Eye*). But now Lord Crickhowell, chairman of the NRA, has written to Michael Howard, environment secretary, saying: "I am concerned that we are beginning to see the creation of a myth and this needs to be firmly rebutted.

"While some of these higher bills arise from EC directives that may not be producing benefits commensurate with their costs, a very substantial part of the increased charges arise from a long overdue drive to achieve the standards set many years ago and which were for too long ignored."

He talks of the need to "do something about filthy and polluted rivers, the discharge of untreated sewage, the repair of broken down Victorian sewers, pollution of bathing beaches." Which is all rather different to Byatt's view. Watch this space...

TRAINS

End of the line

DOOMED train-builder ABB Transportation (formerly BREL — see *Eyes passim*) has invented a brilliant new concept: inverse performance-related pay.

Bo Södersten was installed as the company's managing director to sort out the disasters that followed its privatisation in 1989 and to transform it into a vibrant international train builder with a secure future. Now, however, by Södersten's own admission the company is on the verge of closure. So by way of a reward, Södersten has been awarded a 144 per cent pay rise!

When a company declares an £11.7 million loss on a turnover of £401.2 million, a pay freeze for the threatened employees should perhaps be the order of the day. Workers at ABB Transportation were thus astounded to learn that in 1992 their managing director's salary rose from a hefty £114,360 to an even more generous £278,884. Shortly afterwards, the ABB board offered the workforce a massive, er, "zero pay rise".

Introducing the firm's disastrous annual report, chairman John Darby wrote: "I must tell you that, without new orders, Derby (workshops) will run out of new construction work at the end of 1994 and York by mid next year." Export orders could not fill "the whole order gap", he added.

To be fair to the firm, it must be pointed out that its imminent extinction is almost entirely the fault of Britain's Conservative government, which since the last election has been so shortsighted that it has refused to recognise that badly-needed new trains must be funded now to stop BR and London Underground falling apart by the end of the decade.

When thousands of ABB workers are thrown on to the dole — the last nail in the coffin of Britain's once-supreme train building industry — just watch the president of the board of trade do absolutely nothing before breakfast, lunch, dinner and tea. He and his colleagues will huff and puff that they could not intervene to save the industry last year — as they were urged to again and again (see *Eye* 808).

OIL TAX

Driller killer

WHEN the treasury issued its finance bill last week it was clear that despite intensive lobbying since the budget it is standing firm on changes to its big North Sea oil handout — aka the petroleum revenue tax (PRT).

Norman Lamont, in a moment of lucidity, had discovered that the oil companies had found a way to make the taxpayer finance the exploration of new fields. It was done on the tax return as the companies, groaning about the imposition of PRT at 75 percent, charged their exploration costs against it. By creative accountancy, they had turned the tax into a nice little earner: the higher the tax, the more money they could claw back.

In the budget, Lamont disclosed that the treasury was actually losing £200 million a year on the tax. What worried the treasury was that this was a subsidy — public expenditure disguised as private enterprise. As the government and Tory party have too many friends in the oil companies to scrap the loophole, the solution was for Lamont to change its details.

The change — first highlighted by the *Eye* — resulted in the tax being reduced from 75 percent to 50 percent on existing oil (and gas) fields, and its abolition altogether for oil from new fields. The cost of exploration, appraisal and development of new fields can no longer be claimed against profits.

The change has been welcomed by some of the bigger companies, led by BP, which make most of their money by simply pumping up oil and selling it. But the smaller companies, which do the exploring and do not have such expensive public relations machines to press their case, have warned the government that the change will mean that they will sack at least 10,000 of their workforce, including the highly skilled divers who do the most dangerous jobs.

Last year 116 new wells were drilled. This year the figure will probably drop to 80. The longterm prospect for Britain as an oil producer has been seriously reduced as exploration companies take their drills elsewhere.

SWANYARD

Buying studio time

MORE news about Margarita Hamilton, chairman and managing director of Swanyard Studios plc, and her husband RAI, the Old Harrovian share-dealing spiv (see last *Eye*).

In March, merchant bankers Hill Samuel issued a writ against Margarita for debts totalling £672,893.14. She had signed an unconditional personal guarantee for all of the group's bank debts last July. Threatened with bankruptcy, Margarita, with the help of RAI, has somehow managed to buy a little more time. The pair have persuaded a couple of Irish backers to come up with enough cash to get Hill Samuel out off their backs: £350,000 has been paid to Hill Samuel, which at roughly 50p in the pound is considerably more than they could have expected from a receivership.

However, the sharks continue to circle the scuppered vessel. The Inland Revenue, which is owed £200,000 by Swanyard, has issued a winding-up petition against the recording studios and music publishing group. Stoy Hayward, Swanyard's former auditors who are owed £100,000, are certain to follow suit. And Ramogan, a company owned by Rick Wright of Pink Floyd, which leased back the company's recording equipment, is owed £180,000 in arrears — a fact which must be a source of embarrassment to Wright's financial adviser, accountant Martin Stainton, who set up the leasing deal.

Stainton, who resigned as a director of Swanyard Studios last year, nonetheless did rather well out of a ludicrous venture by Swanyard to break into the film business. The group lent £1.25 million to a specially created subsidiary production company to make a film called *Runaway Dreams*, which paid Stainton £25,000 as executive producer and gave Margarita the opportunity to fly to and from Miami on Concorde several times.

An ex-staff member told the *Eye* that the film "looked like a soft porn movie without the porn". Although Margarita was confident that "aggressive marketing" of the film in America would yield revenue, Stoy Hayward refused to estimate any projected income stream from the completed product. The pessimistic forecast was proved correct.

RAI Hamilton has milked Swanyard, too. According to the 1990 accounts, Swanyard paid £30,615 to PR Rooster, one of RAI's companies, for services, while PR Rooster owed £87,880 to Swanyard.

And what of the mystery of the missing BMW estate car, leased at £28,000? At one stage it was lent to one of RAI Hamilton's friends. It was subsequently parked at a site away from Swanyard and disappeared. It was reported as stolen to the police and an insurance claim was lodged. The insurance company refused to pay, the police began investigating further and Swanyard withdrew the claim.

RAI and Margarita Hamilton are now separated, but apparently still on good terms. She has ended her long-standing affair with Robert Lee, a former director of Swanyard and the company's solicitor. His firm issued the 1989 libel proceedings (now defunct) against the *Eye* on Swanyard's behalf, and his firm, too, is owed money by Swanyard. Just after Christmas Margarita ran off to Thailand with session sax player Gary Barnacle (she is now living in Fulham), and while she was there Swanyard staff saw their salary cheques bounce. This did not stop her calling Swanyard from Thailand in the first week of January and demanding that £1,000 be sent out to her. The staff were eventually paid in the form of banker's draughts drawn on the NatWest and in cash.

Although RAI and Margarita are separated, the restored 13th-century Walton Castle at Cliveden, near Bristol, which they own with a mortgage from the Bristol and West building society, had its title transferred in October 1992 to one Basil Bouzanis, Margarita's Zimbabwean-resident father. According to records at the Land Registry, Bouzanis was supposedly resident at 33 Queensgate Gardens, SW7 — RAI and Margarita's leasehold flat which has since been sold.

LEUKAEMIA

Talk radiation

A SURVEY of childhood leukaemia in areas inhabited by the families of workers in the North Sea oil industry has concluded that the cause is "population mixing" — the arrival of a large number of migrant families who carry new infections into an area or who are susceptible to unfamiliar viruses.

Naturally, this finding was greeted with whoops of delight by the nuclear industry, which has always tried to argue that the clusters of the leukaemia around its installations at Sellafield, Aldermaston and Dounreay were not caused by the nuclear plants.

The survey was conducted by Dr Leo Kinlen, of the Cancer Research Campaign's epidemiology unit, and published in the *British Medical Journal*. It found rates of leukaemia up to twice as high as would be expected in a typical sample. Dr Kinlen concluded that this weighed against radiation, or a parent working in the nuclear industry, as a cause and was due to "population mixing".

Nuclear Electric issued an eight-page analysis to say that it had been exonerated. But then a reader of the *Eye*, Mr Chris Dold, a trained scientist, noted something peculiar about the report. There was one blindingly obvious omission: the authors seemed to have forgotten all about background radiation in Aberdeen, the unofficial capital of the oil industry. How could they have committed such a howler?

Oil workers helicopter between Dyce airport in Aberdeen and the oil platforms and rigs, frequently staying overnight or longer in Aberdeen. Many have even made their homes in the city, which is built on granite. Granite is high in radiation and has become, for the nuclear industry, a favourite bogey to cite whenever there is a release of radiation from one of its plants. "It was no more than you would get from the normal background radiation in Aberdeen," run the regular apologia from Nuclear Electric, the Atomic Energy Authority, Scottish Nuclear and British Nuclear Fuels.

But suddenly Aberdeen's famous background radiation is ignored. How does Dr Kinlen explain it? At his lab at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford, the *Eye* asked him: "Why do you not take Aberdeen's background radiation into account?" He replied: "This has been looked at before and there is no perceptible relationship." He said the increase in leukaemia which he had detected had come in the period between 1979 and 1983 but not in later years, up to 1988. "Why," he asked, "should the background radiation go away just as 'population mixing' settled down?"

The reason could be that the children born in the area, and those who had grown up there, had developed resistance, just as the locals had done; and that it was the earlier new arrivals who were more susceptible to what was, to them, an unusual dose of radiation.

A radiation expert, Professor Patricia Lindop, told the *Eye* this was a perfectly suitable question for study and discussion. What is baffling is that a serious survey, published by the *BMJ*, after being considered by its normal refereeing method, failed to raise this possibility and did not even mention Aberdeen's background radiation. What is even more baffling — or not — is that this point did not occur to the nuclear industry.

In the City

THE EPIDEMIC of advance fee fraud sweeps on claiming new victims around Britain and the world. Powered by the banks' new found caution in lending, borrowers desperate for funding are being driven into the arms of glib fraudsmen offering unlimited finance in return for five-figure fees up-front. They find their victims through an ever expanding network of commission hungry brokers, self-styled financial advisers, small time accountants and lawyers who readily pass on to the loan seekers fairy tales about philanthropic financial institutions faraway with money to lend at giveaway rates. The game has been updated in the past two years by the introduction of the world's first franchised fraud — the standby letters of credit/prime bank note guarantees/master collateral agreements scam. Many of those pulling the strings are veteran conmen, others are new kids on the block. But all sing the same siren song to trap the unwary.

The names may change but the story is always the same. The borrower is in one country, the fraudsman in another while the mysterious and elusive entity doing the lending, which will have a grand and appropriately credible name or connection, will be in yet a third. All of which makes recovering fees or prosecuting the bad guys next to impossible.

Sometimes the scores are so big that the frauds command headline attention — as with the Salvation Army and the government of Nauru. But mostly the losers slip away nursing their losses leaving no trace or warning for the next wave of suckers.

A new name in the colourful world of phoney financiers is the Royal Trust of Greece, which operates out of Athens. In recent months there have been several reports of businessmen persuaded to pay advance fees for multi-million dollar loans from the Royal Trust. Reports of actual loans are somewhat rarer.

The deal usually involves prime bank note guarantees which are supposed to facilitate a loan through the trust at a highly beneficial rate. As with the standby letters of credit, its profit is said to be coming from the usual 10 percent discount between the face amount of the guarantees and the loan amount. Unfortunately, it seems that the lenders can never quite satisfy the Olympian standards required by Athens. As for the fees, well they were alas always non-refundable.

Anyone tempted by any of these schemes should observe four rules: never pay up front; confirm the identity of the ultimate lender; check with any bank supposedly involved; require evidence of successful loans. Alternatively, believe in Father Christmas and the Tooth Fairy…

One of the longest running exponents of the advance fee game has been Alan Shephard, first with the Barnes International Trust and then with the Martini Foundation. Shephard was no stranger to Dutch fraudster Walter Voss, whose latest advance fee operation involving standby letters of credit was closed down last year. Shephard was arrested in 1977 by the FBI following complaints from victims in the United States and Canada who had handed over £86,000 in return for unfulfilled promises of loans totalling £75 million. Shephard settled the case in 1979 by way of a civil consent decree and the repayment of £14,000.

Shephard transferred his activities to Hong Kong before returning to London in the early eighties with the Martini Foundation. Shephard and Gerard Lanciault, who had previous convictions for cheque fraud and credit card theft, stung several film industry players with promises of generous financing which never materialised.

Now it seems Shephard has pulled it off again, taking down as much as $2 million from several US banking victims of the Martini Foundation scam aided by its supposed founder, world benefactor Alexander Martini.

AFTER more than a year, the European Leisure investigation by the serious fraud office (SFO) is said to have made limited progress on the alleged share ramping ahead of the 1990 bid for Midsummer Leisure.

While there is ample circumstantial evidence of a share support operation involving offshore companies and individuals in Scotland and Ireland, proof has been hard to muster. Not least because of the lack of cooperation from many of those identified in the share buying. However, the investigation is said to have had considerably more success on proving thefts of cash from the company. A decision is expected soon on whether to prosecute.

THE SFO is leaving little to chance when it comes to nailing the brothers Maxwell and their cronies/creatures. Word is that no fewer than seven barristers, including two QCs, are deployed.

Leading the charge will be the victor of Barlow Clowes, Alan Suckling, together with company law expert Michael Crystal. Although further charges and arrests are still expected, it is considered less certain that these will include the Maxwell Communication Corporation share support operation or possibly even the near £100 million thefts from Mirror Group Newspapers. More likely are charges relating to the false information given to Maxwell's bankers, such as on the £1 billion loan to buy Macmillans.

ONCE AGAIN it seems that pressure from *Private Eye* has forced the not so *Independent* to reconsider the position of its tainted tipster "Changi Jim" Slater.

First the investor health warning which follows each weekly Slater column was revised to require that the old company law breaker cannot deal within six weeks before and after tipping a share. Now Slater is disclosing whether or not he has a position in the shares he is boosting. This follows the questions raised in the last *Eye* over Slater's tipping of retailers Motor World just over six weeks after the company was floated and when, if he had been put in on the placing, he would have been able to sell at a fat profit.

The latest change emerged in Slater's 15 April column recommending property/motor spares group Ingham. "My pension scheme bought some shares last year and will be taking up its entitlement (to the current rights issue)", Slater disclosed. However, he did not go on to reveal just how many shares he held and at what price — crucial information for any investor deciding whether to follow Jim in. Perhaps the saintly editor Whittam Strobes and the less saintly (more later) business editor Christopher Huhne should now force that disclosure if they wish to retain a fig leaf of respectability and responsibility.

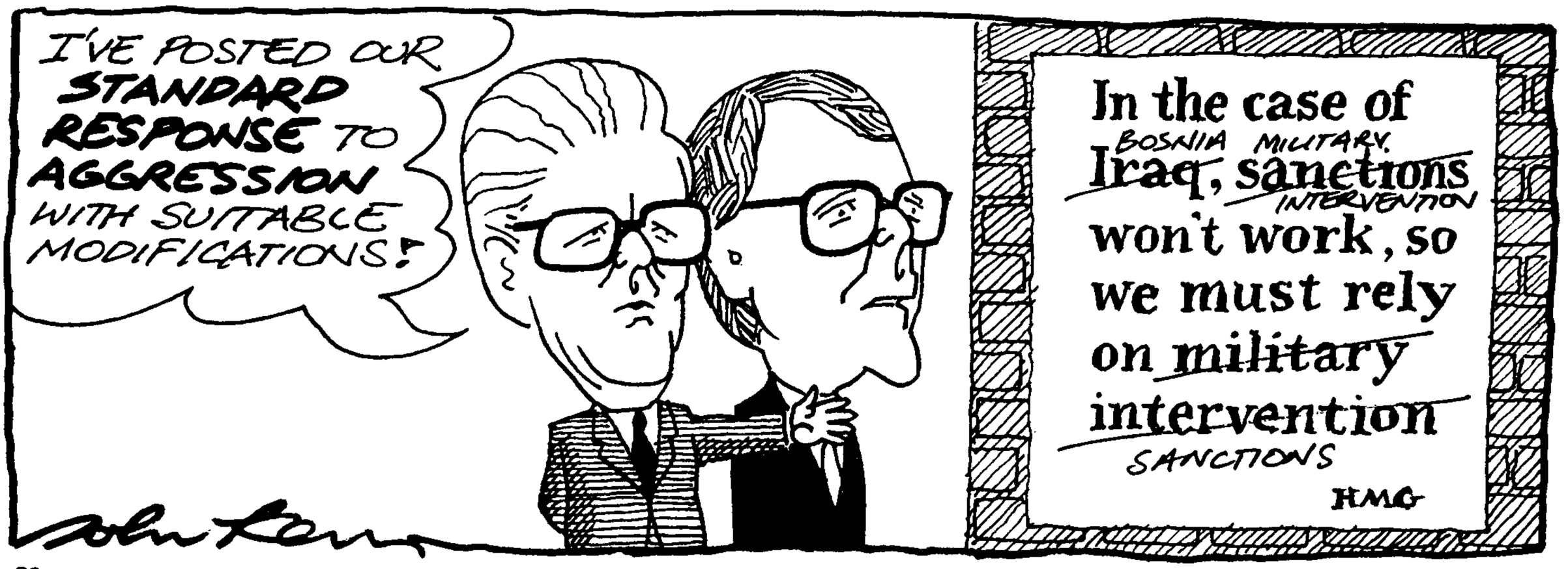
This is especially so as it has been known for many months that Jim was in Ingham and the smart money has been waiting since his column was launched in February for the anticipated puff. It duly arrived but the shares jumped merely from 109p to 116p. Then there are a lot of stale "bulls" of the stock which had a rights issue at 95p a year ago and has just launched a second cash call at 100p. After hitting 117p the shares were down to 83p at the start of the year. All the more reason for knowing at what price Jim is in.

That Jim should be in the little known Ingham is less surprising because of the company's links to Slater associate Guy Sangster of the Vernons pools family. The Sangsters sold Vernons to South African businessmen Hugo Biermann and Julian Askin. They bought into Ingham in late 1989 along with Guy Sangster through a Guernsey company. Biermann later moved into another "shell", Maddox which Slater puffed last year. Slater and Sangster are partners in a private Scottish company, Arion Properties. Slater is chairman, his son Christopher is managing director and Sangster is both a director and shareholder.

These ties naturally in no way suggest that Slater might have been in possession of inside information. And in any event the Sangster link has been removed since December when the family's Guernsey company sold its 11.5 percent stake in Ingham. The Sangsters have been hard hit by the failure of Askin's South African group Tollgate Holdings, owing £60 million. Askin's home was subsequently raided by the South African police. He fled to London where he is now remaining on legal advice.

"Changi Jim" of course knows all about South Africa. It was one of the more successful parts of his Slater Walker empire: thanks to his South African lieutenant Michael Javett; and to paying starvation wages to its black workforce. Slater and Javett made lots of money dealing in the shares of SW satellites with the benefit of inside information. All very *Independent*.

'Slicker'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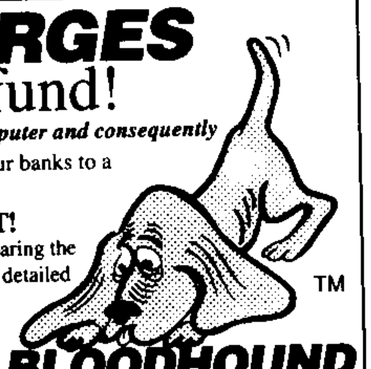

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THE CARTOONIST

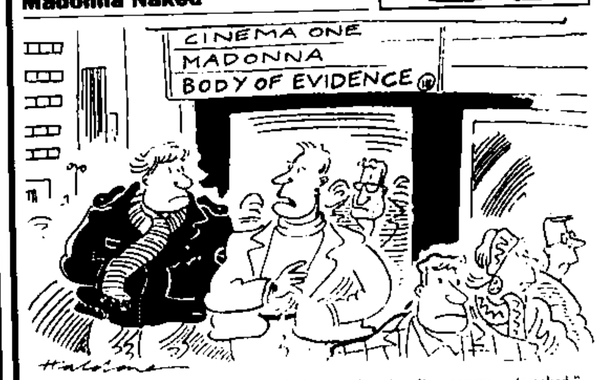
21 April 1993 No 2 — Every Fortnight £1.20

P.M.TV. (continued on Page 16)

Stewards' Inquiry

Strike

Madonna Naked

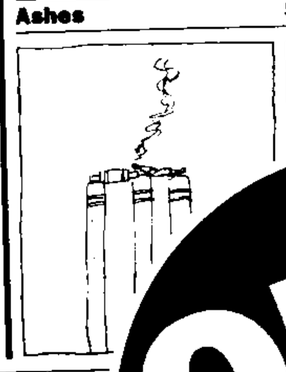


"Scary thing is I've seen Madonna naked more often than I've seen my wife naked"

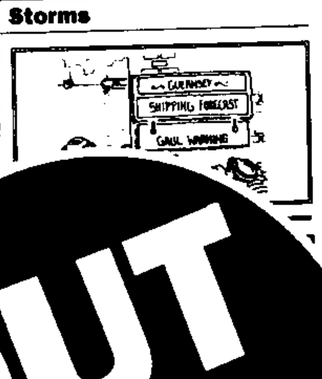
Di on Holiday

"When the HELL do they go back to their father again?"

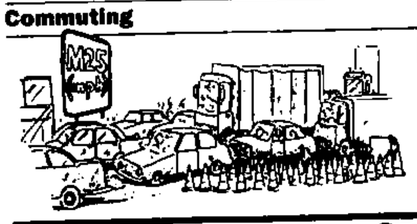
Ashes



Storms



Commuting



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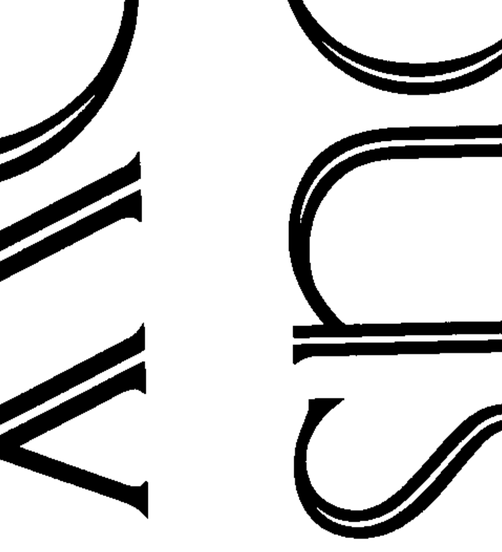

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Send your advertisements to reach us by Tuesday 27th April for inclusion in the next issue.

FOR DISPLAY ADVERTISING: 071 437 4017

Quote of the week:

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The Sunday Times Magazine

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PRISON SWEATSHIRTS — authentic American chain gang sweatshirts, phone 071-278 6419.

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BALLOON SAFARIS around London and South East. Gift vouchers etc. 0784 451007.

BALLOON FLIGHTS. And a-Maying we shall go. Heynonynony. 081-840 0108.

NAME A STAR for the one you love. International star registry allocates and registers name of your choice in USA & Switzerland. Fab gift pack includes splendid colour certificate inscribed in calligraphy and star chart pinpointing exact location. £40 inclusive. Access/Visa/Diners/Amex/cheque. Call Freephone 0800 212493 or write ISR, Freepost, 24 Highbury Grove, London N5 2BR.

CARICATURES FROM PHOTOS. £18.00 0548-810468.

A "TITLE" for a tenner? Details to SA-SURVIVAL (P), Gayfield, Arbroath, Scotland, DD1 1QJ.

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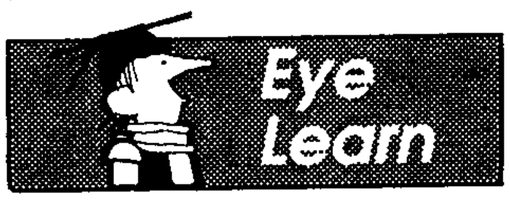

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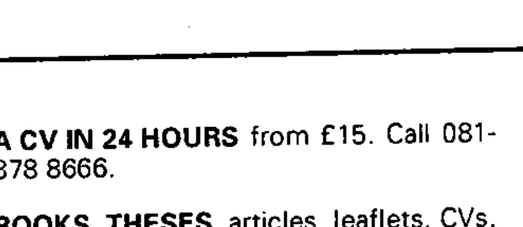

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AIRMILES COUPONS for lovesick graduate. Can anyone help? Thanks. GERALD, 85 Helemsley Road, Sandyford, Tyne and Wear.

STUDENTS NEED £10,000 for Dublin College Radio. Are YOU worthy? Box 0318.

UNWANTED AIR MILES needed to send underprivileged children to Disneyland USA. Box 0418.

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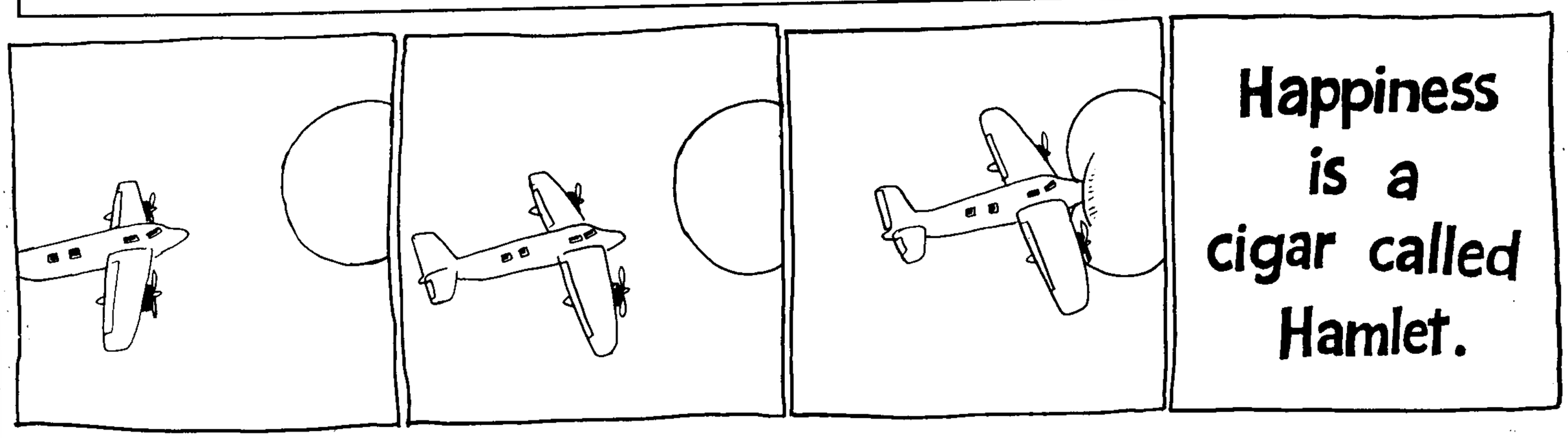

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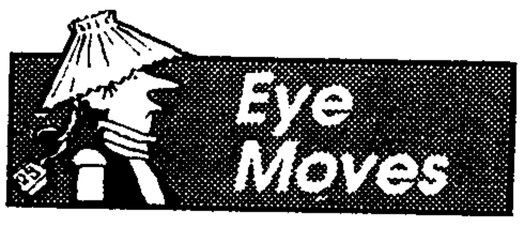

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BUXOM PETITE blonde writer, 42, seeks intelligent literate beau with madcap sense of humour. Box 11117.

TALL PROFESSIONAL "gentleman" 39 at nadir seeking nice intelligent lady for the long run. Music, unconventional adventurous spirit, and loyalty? London. Box 11217.

SERIOUSLY GOOD-LOOKING tall educated upmarket safely married Canadian male, 44, seeks genuinely attractive safely married woman for conversation, romance. London. Box 11317.

ATTRACTIVE LONDON male, 23, brainy, creative, arts-lover, sensitive, caring, SoH, solvent, seeks attractive, petite, stylish, warm, cultured, intelligent girlfriend. No meatball-seekers! Photo appreciated. Box 10617.

TALL DARK HANDSOME man, Pacino type, just can't find Streep. Are you? (West London must.) Box 10717.

SENSUAL ADVENTURER seeks adventuress for uncomplicated uninhibited relationship. I am 40, healthy, wealth, witty, happy with varied interests and seek a partner for fun, laughter, mutual pleasure and exploration. Box 10817.

PROFESSIONAL, KIND, considerate, caring, sensual, tall, dark man (43) with lots of TLC to give seeks 30ish n/s lady with good SoH, who likes hugs, theatre, cinema, travel, most types of music, cats, candlelit dinners. I've my own cottage, car, teeth and hair. London/Home Counties/anywhere. Box 10917.

ATTRACTIVE BLONDE-HAIRED blue-eyed 5'8" youthful 40 year old looking for affectionate cheerful active lady, 25 to 40, with SoH, to share outdoor interests and adventure accompanied by good food, wine and anything which comes naturally. Box 10417.

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HANDSOME SOLVENT professional male (42) graduate seeks beautiful intelligent female 30ish. Do such creatures still inhabit the South West? Photo/phone please. Box 2718.

CURVACIOUS, ATTRACTIVE warm youthful 40s lady n/s, successful business/marriage, seeking male equivalent for adventitious convergence of jubilant unalloyed delight. Bucks/London. Box 2818.

VIVACIOUS BRUNETTE seeks affluent cultured generous gentleman 45+ burning out under pressure to de-fuse and delight. Discretion assured. Box 2918.

HAPPY WITH YOURSELF but just not found the right man? I'm 37, successful, kind and fun to be with. I am looking for a slim, pretty, sensuous girl, under 32 with sense of humour to share my life, two dogs and a house in the country, south of London. If you enjoy a mix of hectic social life combined with music, wine and latenight firelight, please send photo/phone nummber to Box 3018.

E.MIDS LEFTY lady, 30s, seeks uncomplicated man for unadulterated fun. Letter and photo. Box 3118.

CYNICAL PROFESSIONAL man, 30, from Victor Meldrew charm and fashion school, quite good looking, enjoys passive smoking, cinema when we can be bothered seeks older woman (Catherine Deneuve type) for artistic differences of opinion, and fun. Box 3218.

SUCCESSFUL MUSIC business entrepreneur (London) seeks warm, understanding female as friend and occasional confidential assistant. Photo, plus phone number or SAE please. Box 8015.

HANDSOME MALE would like to meet beautiful lady 20-35 for mutual pleasure. Box 7417.

BENEDICK (AS YOU Like It) seeks Beatrice. Box 1418.

QUITE WITTY, interesting male, 41, tall and a bit skinny, lives near Cambridge, likes country walks, crosswords, music, seeks female companion. Box 1518.

IF YOU CAN explain to me why a tall, good looking, athletic, funny, warm, romantic, considerate, loyal, hedonistic, passionate, professional, unattached, nice guy (38) needs to do this then please respond — especially if you are the answer. Box 1618.

PERSONABLE OUTGOING creative anarchistic hedonistic Utopian poet/writer architect cook music-lover (active sixty-something) seeks like-minded loving attractive woman for committed relationship. NW3. Photograph appreciated. Box 1718.

WEST MIDLANDS. Attractive outward going female seeks similar interesting intelligent and caring male 50+. Box 1818.

IF YOU LIKE TO SKI, sail, the theatre, 48-58, I could be the lady for you. NW England. Box 1918.

OXONIAN (ageing Scots bachelor) seeks Oxoniette probably cheeky blonde 28-35 years. Would consider similar Cantabess. Box 2018.

ICING (Independent Competitive Intelligent Non-smoking Gregarious) man (45) needs CAKE (Clever Attractive Kind Extrovert) woman. Cotswolds. Box 2118.

LAKE DISTRICT professional, 35, dilettante, happy, optimistic, seeks lady, 25-35 for indiscreet everlasting mutual TLC. Box 2218.

MALE 38 SEEKS dirty dancing partner. West End. Weeknights. Box 2318.

A COMFORTABLY OFF slim London based married 59 year old seeks an enterprising married woman for daytime dalliance. Photo essential. Box 2418.

ELIGIBLE 6FT MALE, 34, attractive slim active successful happy solvent and intelligent, seeks similar female, 26-34, to share the future with. Photo preferred. London/Herts. Box 2518.

RUINED BY rapacious adventuress but still smiling, interesting professional man, fiftyish tall amusing vigorous seeks attractive lady fortyish intelligent, honest, reliable and unafraid of commitment. Box 2618.

IF YOU ARE 28-36, unattached, intelligent good-looking male and could cope with scatty, but beautiful, intelligent female, 32, who needs rescuing from single existence (E. Midlands), write with photo. Box 3618.

MALE 32 NEEDS horny female for occasional cosy liaisons, discretion assured. Photos please. North West. Box 3718.

WOMAN, 25, PLANNING summer bicycling hoilday round Oblomovistic Russia seeks fellow escapist to lie serf-spotting under Eastern European haystacks, flagon of beer, Horace, Hardy to hand. Male please, day-glo colour designer cycling accoutrements and PC attitudes anathema. Box 3818.

BASIC INSTINCT — attractive natural blonde, slender, mid-40s, 5'4" seeks professional clean-shaven man of the world. N/s extrovert, SoH, sensitivity, for a mutual, very discreet meaningful relationship without ties to enjoy regular upmarket wining, dining etc. Daytime preferred. Occasional evening possible. No hypocrites. London area. Photo/phone number, letter ensures immediate reply. Box 3918.

LUSTY POUTING brunette (26) desires handsome cove (28-38) for mutual adoration and laughs. London/Thames Valley. Photo if poss. Box 4018.

LOVELY, LOVING lady, 40, seeks very special man, probably older, definitely attentive, considerate, reliable, compassionate. Would relocate. Box 3318.

MATURE WOMAN, a young and fit fifty, very tall (6'1") and elegant with it, lots of brains and reasonable attitudes (but then I would think that, wouldn't I?), wants occasional company of tall intelligent man (35-65). Box 3418.

ARROGANT BASTARD seeks arrogant bitch. Box 3518.

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CHIPPENDALE REJECT (36) seeks attractive warmhearted intelligent lady (24-34) to share adventures, travel, extended periods of laughter and good wine. Witty letter/photo please. NW/NE England. Box 4618.

VALUE INDEPENDENCE, need involvement? Male graduate, 61 (Midlands), catholic interests, fit, caring, aware, seeks attractive sensual graduate/professional woman friend/soulmate, free spirit, 40-55, slim, tallish, fit — share and enjoy. Photo returned. Box 4718.

SEXY LADY SOUGHT by opted out solvent City type, 48, sojourning in N. Wales — weekends/holidays/travel available for right picture hatted riding-booted girl. Anywhere, photo please. Box 4818.

DO YOU BELIEVE in two-home relationships? This unattached male needs a lover and compatible companion to share theatre, art, music, good food and wine, travel, wildlife, countryside. But I also need space. I'm 56, affluent, considered considerate and sensitive. Interested? Age immaterial; non-smoking essential. Kent/London/SE/Home Counties. Box 4918.

LOVELY, LONG-HAIRED brunette, 32, no ties, vivacious, affectionate, gentle, intelligent, with many interests and wicked sense of humour, seeks similar, incurably romantic man for summer fun and winter passion, maybe permanently? Photo please. North West. Box 5018.

MALE PROFESSIONAL 53, tall slim articulate non-smoker, enjoys town or country. Seeks honest, friendly female to share fun and socialising. No lefties or veggies! Photo welcomed. Box 5118.

WIDOWER, YOUNG N/S, 63, looks for happy lady, 50+, preferably ravishing, capable of reciprocal TLC and looking for fun — to start with! Photo welcomed. Box 5218.

SLIM, SOLVENT, sexy, stunning, stallion with SoH seeks sensual, sophisticated, stylish, stable lass, sensational in the saddle, U28, London based. No Princess Annes need apply. Photo a must. We're under starter's orders! Box 5318.

BEAUTIFUL, ELEGANT blonde, 30s, seeks wonderful wealthy man to end solo life. Photo please. Box 5418.

MANAGING DIRECTOR 50, Gatwick based, seeks attractive, caring part time confidante interested in aviation and travel to share the ups and downs of life's rich pattern. Box 5518.

TALL ATTRACTIVE professional 50s male, based Northants, seeks n/s attractive intelligent lady for fun, friendship, relationship. Phone, photo, returned. Box 5618.

BASIL FAWLTY would like to meet Polly. No Sybil or hotel. Box 5718.

ANARCHIC VEGETARIAN male 31 seeks female companion, Kent area. Box 6818.

CENTRAL SHIRES blonde 40ish Mercedes sports female (ono) sought by younger (33) broad-minded married male. Box 6918.

TALL, ATTRACTIVE graduate male, 31, Surrey/London, seeks intelligent female with SoH to explore possibilities. Box 7018.

MR RIGHT SEEKS Miss Bright. 45 year old handsome, successful, youthful London Scot feels it's time for happy families. Photo appreciated. Box 7118.

DEAR MISS CECILY, Bunbury's condition is worsening by the day. Do write soon, Algernon. Box 7218.

MARRIED MAN, 50, in celibate marriage, looking for lady to remind him what life can offer. No strings, London based, but able to travel. Box 7318.

HAMPSHIRE: BLONDE slim funloving professional woman, 45, n/s, needs inspiring and intelligent man. Box 7418.

TALL MALE, 33, intelligent, graduate, caring, loving, witty good bloke who enjoys conversation, reading, theatre and sport seeks lady for romance and serious relationship. London/Herts. Box 7518.

ELEGANT BLONDE lady graduate 27, enjoys opera, good food, the countryside and travel seeks older professional gentleman 38-48. Bucks/Oxon. Box 7618.

"GENTLE LOVE in temperate zones — pleasures in thy private ones": Tempting a slim, empathetic, independent lady, 30+, who relishes untying inhibiting bonds and easing the libido towards durable, discreet mutual enjoyment with this tall, educate, very personable bachelor, 52, Lincolnshire. Box 7718.

ATTRACTIVE SOLVENT sensual lady (40), libido comatised, seeks loyal handsome educated (30+) London based man for urgent resuscitation and sexual flurries. Photo + tel essential. Box 7818.

HAVE THEY DISAPPEARED? Definitely not — here's one! Caring male graduate, 27, seeks attractive, intelligent, female, 20-30, who appreciates romance, cuddles and sincerity. Your photo for mine. London, South East. Box 7918.

MRS ROBINSON — a room at the Hilton is ready, this graduate, 30, tall, slim, attractive and successful is waiting for you. Please send a photo to remind me how beautiful and sweet you are. London are anywhere. Box 8018.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, 30, single, seeks attractive married woman for a discreet but adventurous affair. Photo. London, Berkshire. Box 8118.

ERUDITE LONDON-BASED lady 40s with sharp sense of humour seeks educated healthy unattached male to match for mental and physical stimulation. Box 8218.

WELL-MAINTAINED 1966 model seeks lady owner for short excursions or long adventure. Northants/anywhere. Box 8418.

ARE YOU 6'3", 19+ stone, dark haired, employed, fun? If you like 5'11" blonde "older (continental) women" (44) pls. write with photo (returned). Box 8518.

TALL DARK SLIM fit businessman, 50, trapped in lifeless marriage seeks slim attractive n/s lady 30-40 in similar situation for warm loving romantic relationship. Photo please (returned). South West. Box 8618.

JEWISH MALE, 36, married out, now divorced, seeking similar female. J.A.M. Midlands area. Box 8718.

COTSWOLDS — MALE, early 30s, enjoys concerts, curries, pubs and tennis, seeks warm, intelligent lady to share any of these and hopefully more. Box 8818.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL chap (34), married, seeks comely wench (25-45) for discreet dalliance. London. Photo appreciated. Box 8918.

MALE 31. NOT STUPID. In acceptable financial and physical condition. Wants female for dinner and other pleasures.. London. Box 9018.

BUXOM CULTURED prof lady 50 seeks intellectual lifelong partner, financially solvent, to live in Europe. Box 9118.

INTENSE PERSONABLE student needs attractive intelligent woman (20s/30s) to take control. Box 4118.

HANDSOME MALE would like to meet beautiful lady 20-35 for mutual pleasure. Box 4218.

DUNDEE MALE (young) 36, 5'6", n/s, unattached, fit, SoH, into the outdoors, sport, travel, a wee bevy, seeks similar attractive female. Photo appreciated. Box 5818.

BUXOM HORNY BITCH (32) seeks tall horny bastard for passionate horny times. Box 5918.

GENTLE, 56-YEAR old man, 5'6", humorous, quietly virile, unhappily married, seeks unashamedly sensual woman for uncomplicated lust. Age immaterial. Avon/Glos/Somerset/Wilts/M4 corridor. Box 6018.

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HAPPILY DIVORCED dad (33) seeks lady friend. Absolutely no pre-conditions (except for SoH). North East. Box 4418.

URBAN FOGEY (37), kempt, gainly, peccable, seeks bosomy consort to share strawberries this summer. London/elsewhere. Box 4518.

Overseas readers! Remember, you must reply to a Box Number advertiser within 2 months of the advertisement appearing.

HANDSOME, AMUSING, solvent bachelor, mid-thirties (not the usual loudmouthed bore) seeks gorgeous, stunning, intelligent career type girl, 18 to 28ish, with long silky hair, long slender legs and long red nails; Midlands/anywhere: good letter & photo guarantees reply — go on, be bold! Box 6118.

DOCTOR, 45, TALL, fair, handsome, cheerful, n/s, married, wide interests include music, seeks attractive well-spoken lady for discreet daytime pleasures in SW London/Thames Valley region. Box 9818.

SUCCESSFUL GUY, 40, slim, 6', good looking, generous, great sense of humour, unhappily married, seeks friendship and a little romance from affectionate intelligent girl 20-40, slim, attractive with positive attitude. Box 11017.

MAKE BABY with man 34 married single, Kent Essex Sussex London. Box 11417.

SELF GRATIFICATIONIST seeks self gratificationiste for lunches/stories/erotic duets? No strings/no pressures. Midlands. Box 11517.

PATRICIA HODGE lookalike, 33, vaguely eccentric, ball-crushing wit, based Paris, would appreciated cultivated complex man without complications who knows his way around a woman. Bon viveur welcome. Photo. Box 9218

WEALTHY BRITISH businessman, 44, with a passion for life, seeks very young, very sexy girlfriend, any nationality, to share good times and lots of travel. Photo and letter appreciated. Box 9318.

SCIENTIST PHD Chemistry (single male 41) seeks lady assistant to explore interesting chemical reactions. West of England. Box 9418.

EXPATRIATE NON-SMOKING professional man, 32, likes travel, sailing and the outdoors, seeks attractive outgoing female for serious relationship. Southern Germany. Box 9518.

DON'T READ THIS unless you truly seek companionship of Herts/Beds articulate independent woman plus TLC and home cooking. I'm 38, n/s, tall, happy and, so I'm told, good looking but not a Twiggy! Box 9618.

CARING, SENSITIVE, witty male, 45, seeks attractive intelligent woman 30-45 in similar lifeless marriage for excitement of secret daytime affair Cambs/Beds. Please write with photo in absolute assurance of discretion and confidentiality. Box 9718.

TALL LAUGHING AMERICAN WOMAN
likes Garrison Keillor,
Wayne's World and Charles Taylor
seeks man 35-45
to go dancing through life with
(or maybe the movies on a
Saturday).
Box 6318.

GENUINELY STUNNING tall very upmarket educated Canadian banker, 44, safely married, seeks very attractive upmarket safely married woman for wonderful times together. Pimlico. Box 6218.

Eye Soldier

TWO INTELLIGENT single fun-loving females seek correspondence from similar officers and gentlemen (28-40). Box 6418.

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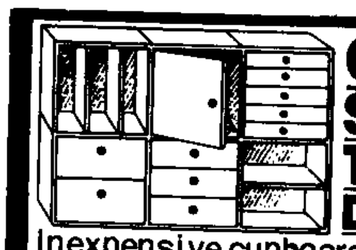

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ATTRACTIVE, ARTICULATE, slim, non smoking male with good SOH seeks to share adventure, tenderness and lifes outrageous fortunes with fun lady, 25-40. Ring 0839 514221

ATTRACTIVE, WARM, intelligent young at heart woman, 38, seeks similar man 30-45, for friendship and fun. Potential soulmates welcome. Ring 0839 514017

COMPANY EXECUTIVE, SW Scotland, 37, workaholic, seeks attractive lady for discreet liaisons, candlelit dinners, etc. Age unimportant. Ring 0839 514419

STRIKINGLY ATTRACTIVE, blue eyed brunette, succesful designer, fit, challenging, exceptional female seeks handsome, 6ftish, blue eyed, fit, non-smoking dark haired male. You won't be disappointed! Ring 0839 514410

CLAUDIA CARDINALE (when she was young), attractive, slim, fit, sexy, 38, currently successful in Germany, looking for handsome, slim, tall partner up to 48. Ring 0839 514079

OUTSTANDING MALE. Attractive. Top professional. Writer. Ultra fit. Caring, sensitive, understanding. Childish sense of humour, seeks not too serious relationship with stunning, intelligent girl. Ring 0839 514372

ATTRACTIVE, HAPPY, SOCIABLE, professional woman, 50's, loves mountain walking, skiing, the outdoors, travelling. Seeks active, easy going, open minded, adaptable man 50's, with similar interests. Ring 0839 514431

GENUINELY GOOD LOOKING GUY, (modest too!), youthful, mid 30s, sporty, easy going, can't believe he is doing this, seeks truly slim, pretty, affectionate girlfriend, 23-33. Ring 0839 514626

RAVING MAD, BRIGHT ACTRESS, singer, parent. Attractive, fit. I hate doing this, but my friends made me do it. If this rings a bell, ring me. Ring 0839 514789

PASSIONATE PHOTOGRAPHER, 44, tall, slim and fit, seeks willowy waisted, sensitive lady, who will find peace and strength in partnership with me. Ring 0839 514776

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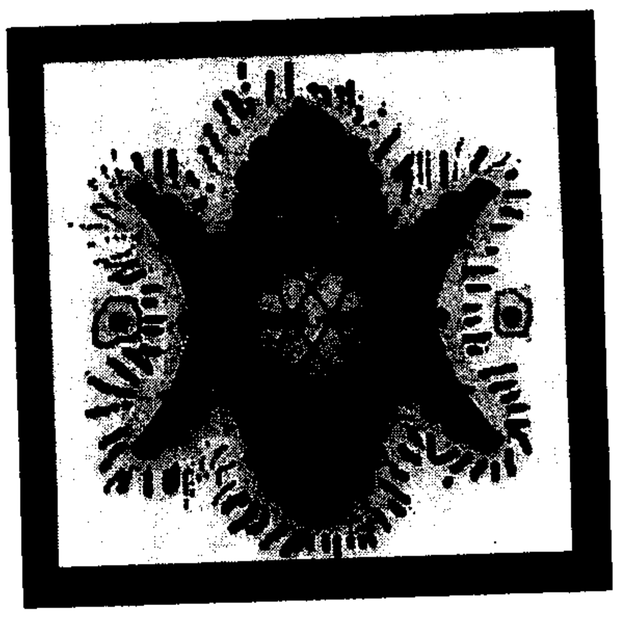

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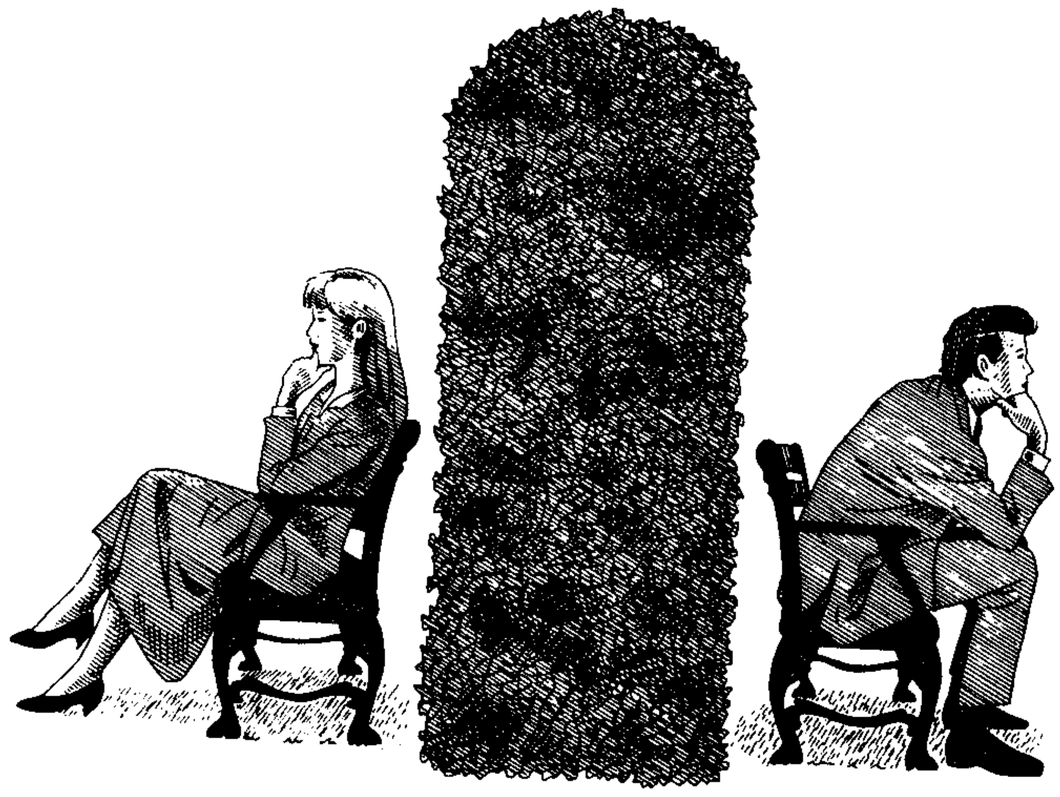

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